

FAITH  
AND  
ORDER

MOTIVE

NOVEMBER 1957



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# MOTIVES: UNITY

## ***Christ prays before his captivity:***

As thou didst send me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be consecrated in truth.

I do not pray for these only, but also for those who are to believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. The glory which thou hast given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and thou in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them even as thou hast loved me.

—GOSPEL OF JOHN 17:18-23

## ***Paul to the church at Ephesus:***

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all.

—EPHESIANS 4:1-6

## ***Peter's message to the Churches of Asia Minor:***

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people,<sup>1</sup> that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were no people but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy.

—1 PETER 2:9-10

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<sup>1</sup> The people of his possession.



RT. REV. ANGUS DUN  
Episcopal Bishop  
of Washington, D. C.

forward from oberlin:

*Despite all the warnings to the contrary, many expected—either fearfully or hopefully—that the first North American Faith and Order Conference at Oberlin, Ohio, would project specific plans of church union. The study conference held on the campus of Oberlin College (Oberlin, Ohio) did accomplish objectives and chart new paths to unity, but it must be measured in terms of goals it set for itself. Its ultimate success depends on how churches carry on the mutual encounter and discovery begun here.*

*The conference, sponsored by the Canadian Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U. S. A., and the U. S. Conference for the World Council of Churches took place Sept. 3-10. It had been carefully*

*prepared for two years under the direction of program and study secretary, Dr. Paul Minear, Yale Divinity School professor of New Testament. Its goal: to determine*

*"The Nature of the Unity We Seek."*

*For eight days the nearly 300 delegates from 39 denominations sat down together in small groups to discuss problems that were both basic and specific. They had in front of them orientation papers prepared by sixteen regional study groups located in cities from Honolulu to Saskatoon, and Nashville to Boston.*

*Dr. J. Robert Nelson, secretary, Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, gave the opening address which forms an introduction to the four addresses which followed on successive nights of the conference.*

*These addresses represent reports of the American chairmen of the four theological commissions on Faith and Order.*

*These commissions are: the church, traditions, institutionalism, and worship. The articles following Dr. Nelson's article are these four reports, edited especially for motive.*

## DO WE REALLY WANT UNITY ?

BY W. A. VISSER 'T HOOFT

*Therefore, holy brethren, who share in a heavenly call, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession. (Hebrews 3:1 RSV)*

**O**UR theme is: the unity we seek. But is it so certain that "we," the members of all the churches here represented, *really seek unity?*

There are a number of Christians who do not seem to be too dissatisfied with the present situation of the Christian churches. They see no reason for radical changes and do not suffer from our divisions. We hear it said that the great diversity of denominations is really an asset in that every type of person can somewhere find something which will suit his special need. The underlying assumption is, of course, that the Church exists in order to *satisfy* one of the many desires of men, and that the Church is therefore, in the last analysis, an instrument which belongs to men and which they have a right to fashion according to their own will and insight.

As long as that conception of the Church is so widely held, there is little hope for any true advance in unity. Considerations of efficiency, of the need for a common

witness and a common strategy may limit our ecclesiastical anarchy to some extent, but unity will never be achieved as long as we remain imprisoned in a human, all-too-human view of the nature of the Church. Ecumenical education may widen our horizons, but it will fail in its basic purpose as long as the ecumenical seed is sown in the barren soil of man-centered church life. The ecumenical movement itself is in danger as long as its deepest intentions are not understood by the great mass of churchmen. There is therefore nothing more urgent than to ask what God's Word has to say about the nature of the Church and of its unity. We read again Hebrews 3:1 and note that the literal translation is: *partners or partakers in a heavenly call.*

In the Bible the point of departure is a *call*. It is a person-to-person call from God who is a living, speaking God to individual men and women. To hear that call, to discover that there is not only the silence of loneliness, the music of voices which we love and the noise of the crowd, but that we are addressed by one who as Creator and Redeemer is the true sovereign of our lives, is the first step on the road toward Christian faith.

motive



The Epistle speaks of a *heavenly call*. That does not mean a call which concerns our future existence alone, but a call which comes from beyond our world, a transcendent call, a call which is characterized by ultimate, fully sovereign authority and which reminds us that our true citizenship is citizenship in that kingdom of God, the full manifestation of which we expect and for the coming of which we pray. The call comes to all those who have ears to hear. They are in the language of St. Paul the "called saints." As soon as we are called we find ourselves in the company of other men and women who have heard the same voice and have decided to respond to its invitation.

And this company is not a collection of individuals; it is a body of fellow pilgrims. Our text defines the holy brethren as those who share in a heavenly call, literally as those who are partners in the call; that is, who participate in what is in the last analysis one and the same call.

With our deep-rooted modern individualism we tend to think of calling or vocation first of all in terms of the specific mandate which God addresses to each particular person. Now the New Testament speaks very clearly about such specific callings. In fact, the variety of ministries and gifts of grace which we find in the life of the early church has practically never been equalled in the life of the church in later periods. But these particular calls are never considered as private affairs. They are part of the over-all call to the people of God. The cohesion

and oneness of God's work among men are constantly brought out. We are partners in that we have heard one and the same comprehensive call. What you have heard and what I have heard comes from one and the same God who speaks to us in one and the same man, Jesus Christ. We have one and the same hope of our calling—the hope for one and the same Kingdom. If God's call to us is one call, that must mean that God sees us as one people, one family. We may draw as many dividing lines as we can, we may organize specific confessions and denominations; in God's sight there is just the one body of those who have heard his call and respond to it. God's Church cannot be divided because its unity belongs to its very essence. It has been remarked that in the impressive, monotonous enumeration in Ephesians 4: one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one Lord—we do not find the expression: one Church. The reason is surely that the oneness of the Church is so obvious to the New Testament generation that it need not be explicitly stated.

**T**HIS then is the true ground of our unity. This is the reason why we are not called to construct laboriously our unity out of a great many fragments which do not seem to fit together. This is why our search for unity is not in vain. What we are called to do is to manifest what is inherent in our common call, to liberate the Church of God from the man-made prisons in which we have sought to capture it, to make visible to ourselves and to the world that we are partners in one heavenly calling. This then is the first consequence which we must draw from our text: our unity is given in the will of God and in his plan. In that sense our unity is *real*, for what can be more real than that which exists in God? In another sense it is terribly unreal for we have obscured it by our divisions. Even though by the grace of God we are no longer as isolated from each other as we were and we have the World Council of Churches through which we can give expression to our sense of belonging together, we are far from showing the world that unique unity in faith, in life, in worship and order which is inherent in the Christian Gospel. Such unity does not exclude a great and rich variety, but it would exclude contradictions in essential affirmations of faith, separation at the Lord's table, competition except in the form of spiritual emulation.

It is a dangerous misunderstanding to think that the only alternative to disunity is a monolithic, centralized and imperialistic superchurch, a sort of ecclesiastical Leviathan, *Tertium dadur*. We are precisely called to manifest that wonderful combination of authority and freedom, of unity and diversity, of partnership in the call of God and variety in the gifts of grace which is described in 1 Cor. 12. It would be a sorry defeatism to believe that that is merely an ecclesiastical castle in the air.

If we are really partners in one and the same call, unity—visible, convincing unity—is not a matter that Chris-



W. A. Visser 't Hooft

tians can be for or against. It does not admit of neutrality. This is part of our Christian commitment. There is no place for neutrality. The pioneers of the ecumenical movement, men like Brent, Gardiner, Mott, Ainslie in this country, were not the victims of some wild utopianism. They had rediscovered a basic biblical insight. *Dieu le veut*. He who does not gather with the Lord—that is, he who does not work for the unity of the Church—scatters; that is, he is not on the side of the God who gathers his children together.

There will be no true advance in the ecumenical movement until this constraint, this pressure of our common calling, is felt by the whole membership of our churches. The finest systems of ecumenical education will be of no avail, unless it is preached and understood in our congregations that the Church is the Church of God and that he wills its unity.

But how can we arrive at this unity? The answer is contained in our text. We are told to consider Jesus and to consider him as apostle and high priest. Is it strange that Jesus is called an apostle? Not if we remember that the verb *apostellein* is so often used by Jesus himself. In John 17 we read that Jesus prays: "As Thou didst send me into the world, so I have sent them (the disciples) into the world." The apostle is God's special servant entrusted with a mission. And Jesus is in a real sense the original apostle, as Hebrews 12 puts it: "the pioneer" whose life and death and resurrection are at the same time the beginning and the foundation of the mission to which God calls his people.

THE fact that we are asked to consider Jesus as the one sent by God to perform a specific mission shows that the call we have heard is not simply a call to a new status. God did not call us to give us a claim to specific spiritual privileges. His call is a call to action, a mandate, an invitation to participate in the great mission entrusted to his people in the whole world. There is only one mission as there is one call and one Church. The mission consists in the ministry of reconciliation through which men are reconciled to God and with each other. It includes of course the witness to the ends of the earth among all who have not yet heard the call. For the very *raison d'être* of the Church lies in God's desire that his offer of reconciliation in Christ may be carried by his ambassadors to all nations, to all men. But mission refers to the total task of the Church and includes therefore the life which it exemplifies in its fellowship as it reconciles nations, races, classes the disinterested service it renders to all in need, the witness through which it proclaims the Lordship of Christ over all realms of life and pronounces God's judgment on injustice, greed, lust for power. Since the mission is the response to the one call, it must be carried out in togetherness and fellowship. It is not simply that we waste our energies by failing to cooperate or to develop a common strategy. This goes deeper. We do not accomplish the full purpose of God unless we witness in unity, unless our whole approach to the world manifests the

marvelous cohesion and harmony of God's plan, unless we demonstrate how God reconciles his own people among themselves. In the great encounter with the other religions which have found new vitality, in the conflict with totalitarianism, in the struggle against cheap caricatures of the Christian Gospel, our cause lacks convincing power as long as we do not prove that we live under the authority of the same Word of God and have received the same marching orders.

Unity grows as we realize that we share in one call and begin to fulfill our mission together. This means far more than cooperation between the churches—as they are. Churches can cooperate without being changed. They cannot participate in the total mission of the Church without their life being transformed. Once the common mission takes precedence over everything else, the whole center of attention is shifted and the Church receives a new sense of proportion. Self-centered institutionalism is replaced by faithfulness to the divine plan, and the wonderful traffic of sharing of the gifts of grace begins to flow. Has that not been the most precious thing in the life of the ecumenical movement already, how the renewed obedience of our Church has helped other churches to rediscover the great common mission? How shallow, how poor would the ecumenical movement be today if it had not received the testimony of those churches which have found new life in the very moment of their greatest peril.

We have got to give attention to one further aspect of our text. We are not only to consider Jesus, the apostle, but also Jesus, the high priest. The ultimate reason why we are indestructibly linked together is the act by which Jesus performed once and for all the supreme sacrifice. The call which has come to us is an offer of reconciliation—not a possible reconciliation or a theory about reconciliation, but an effective, factual reconciliation. Our unity has its irremovable center in the Cross. As we come nearer to that Cross we come nearer to each other. As we consider the High Priest who has shared our condition, tempted in every respect as we are, yet without sinning, we realize more deeply that our lack of unity is a denial of his work of salvation.

At the Lord's table to which we are invited we will meet him as he shares with us his body, broken for us, and his blood, shed for us. We come as men and women who know only too well that they are not worthy to gather the crumbs under that table. We hear embarrassing questions. If this sacrament is the sacrament of unity *par excellence*, how can it be that we meet at this table and still remain separate in other ways? And have we the right to deny access to the Lord's table to any who believe sincerely that they will meet the Lord himself in this sacrament? But, thank God, at his table the Lord himself speaks the first and the last word. As he gives himself once again to us, he will convince us that he holds the initiative in our lives and that of our churches, that he continues to gather his disciples and that he will complete what he began.



## the oberlin conference in ECUMENICAL PERSPECTIVE

BY J. ROBERT NELSON

AS FAITH AND ORDER CHAIRMAN OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, DR. NELSON HAS GIVEN EXCELLENT LEADERSHIP TO THE STUDY OF CHURCH UNITY THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS. IN THIS ARTICLE HE GIVES AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY AREAS OF THE OBERLIN CONFERENCE. IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE CONFERENCE, DR. NELSON ASSUMED HIS NEW DUTIES AS DEAN OF THE VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY DIVINITY SCHOOL.

**W**HAT is now taking place in Oberlin is no isolated event in time or in the world; rather it is the consummation of many antecedents and the anticipation of significant consequences. What these antecedents have been is known to us. As to the consequences we can only conjecture and hope. Because we are able to discern the work of God's hand in the multiform event and processes of the ecumenical movement which have led to this moment, we can assert with confidence that God has been disclosing to his people the shape and lineaments of the Church's true unity.

Often our dimness of vision, our coldness of heart, or our lack of authentic faith, hope and love has prevented us from receiving this disclosure. And even now, when our spirits have become more willing and receptive, our flesh—that is, our carnal suspicion and self-satisfaction—is still weak. However negative may be the judgments of God against us Christians as perpetuators of division, we find strength in the knowledge that

for more than a century he has been leading us toward that form of unity which we cannot yet discern, but which is the expression of his perfect will.

Within this great surge and flow of work and prayer for unity, the organized efforts of the World Conference on Faith and Order and the Commission on Faith and Order have been a mainstream. Probably very few of us here are unacquainted with the story of this movement since the decisive work of Bishop Brent in 1910. His was actually not the first proposal for a world conference on Faith and Order. Before the middle of the seventeenth century, John Dury had suggested such a conference in Europe. Even the words "Faith and Order" are found in John Eliot's book, *Communion of Churches*, of 1665. But nearly 300 years were required to pass before the condition of the separate churches was congenial for the holding of such a conference.

We of this generation, who have become so thoroughly conditioned to

the procedures of church conferences that we would do well to have our names and denominations embroidered on our left lapels, have hardly caught up to the wisdom of John Dury, when he wrote the following advice to contemporary and yet unborn delegates:

Nor is there any one thing that doth more intangle and increase the multiplication of needless Debates, than the mistake of the points of difference either wilfully or ignorantly entertained. By this means Satan doth enable and engage men's spirits to make their contentations inextricable, endless and irreconcilable; for when the question is not distinctly stated, and men are entered upon controversy, they will rather alter the point of debate twenty times, than seem to be found in error once. (Quoted by Newman Smyth, *Constr. Quarterly*, 1916, p. 412)

He who has ears, let him hear!

A wholly new influence upon Christian churches of the world has been felt in this century because of the great Faith and Order conferences,



with their preparatory studies, confrontations, discussions, reports, and personal experiences. The effects of these conferences have been threefold:

1. First, a growing number of Christians have been educated in the complexities of doctrine and order to be found in all the churches.

2. A continuing organization for the systematic study of all matter affecting the unity and division of the Church has been at work.

3. And an extending and often revolutionary leaven of thought has gone abroad to remind Christians of their obligation to remove the hindrances to their oneness in Jesus Christ.

**J**UST twenty years ago this summer, when the Edinburgh and Oxford conferences decided to merge their forces, it was agreed unconditionally that the working principles and purposes of the Faith and Order movement would have to be preserved and continued in the new World Council of Churches.

Since 1948 the Commission on Faith and Order has been an integral and effective organ of the World Council. At the Third World Conference in Lund, 1952, it was decided that the Commission, with a maximum of one hundred members, should become a part of the World Council's proposed Division of Studies. This organizational adjustment was made at Evanston in 1954. When this step was taken, many a veteran's head wagged with disapproval. Faith and Order is finished, they said. It is boxed up in a bureaucratic department, subject to other authorities. Sing the Requiem for a lost cause.

I hope that by this time the developments of the Faith and Order work within the World Council have themselves assuaged the pessimism of persons who held such fears. As the Council has gone from strength to strength in recent years, so has the work for Christian unity. These developments have been:

**F**IRST, there is now being carried forward an exceedingly important program of study of the major issues affecting the unity of the Church. With

due respect to the great accomplishments of the Lausanne and Edinburgh period, we can say without boastfulness that today there are more of the world's leading Christian thinkers giving more time to the common study of more Faith and Order questions than ever before. Nearly one hundred prominent theologians in many countries are members of our eight theological commissions in North America, Europe and Asia. In addition there are varying numbers of participants in the Faith and Order committees and study groups appointed by the churches of different countries. The British Council of Churches has its Faith and Order group, as do similar bodies in Holland, Sweden, Australia and other lands. In North America we give due recognition to the numerous persons who have worked together in preparation for our present conference. These efforts in their entirety constitute the study work of Faith and Order.

- I. Commanding much interest in theological circles today is the study described by Professor Calhoun. The recognition of the Church as being wholly dependent upon Jesus Christ and inextricably related to him in its earthly life is not a novel discovery. It is the very presupposition of the New Testament witness that the Messiah and his people, the Shepherd and his flock, the Head of the Body and its members belong together. While acknowledging this relationship in our Bible study or theological reflection, however, we have frequently in ecumenical discussion talked of the Church as though our own denominational traditions and teachings were, at best, the sufficient media of the life of Jesus Christ in the Church, or, at worst, the substitute for the faithful conforming of the Church's life to his life. Professor Calhoun tells how theologians in his commission are facing together the wonder of Jesus Christ, and, with the humility of those who know only in part, are suspending for the time their confessional self-consciousness and seeking in common a clearer understanding of both the nature of the Church and its unity given by and in our one Lord.

- II. The study explained by Professor

Outler is one of the most obvious relevance and yet one which has been passed by until the present. It concerns the relation of the one great Christian Tradition and the various confessional traditions to the movement for unity. We all confess and teach the one central Tradition of the saving Gospel of Christ, and yet we inevitably inherit and are influenced by the different historical traditions of past centuries.

By coming to a more adequate recognition of the one great Tradition which gives the Church in all generations its life and continuity, and by being able more objectively to judge the validity of our separate traditions, may we not find the way to closer concord in doctrine and church life less cluttered with obstacles than it now is? Moreover, can we not learn to regard the "common history" of the people of God in all the centuries and all countries to be a unitive, rather than a divisive, factor? To such questions, and with much expectancy, the members of the Theological Commission on Tradition and Traditions address themselves.

- III. Our third report on Faith and Order studies is by Dean Muelder. It concerns a question which will be encountered at many points during the course of this conference, for its implications are nearly limitless in the relations of the denominations to each other and to the one Church. We are speaking about what are often and erroneously called "the nontheological factors." Since theology is also concerned with the common forms and structures of churches, however, we prefer to call these the "social and cultural factors affecting unity and division."

To be more specific still, we are studying now the role of ecclesiastical institutionalism in the whole question of unity. Granted that churches cannot exist as purely spiritual societies, anymore than we as persons can live without bone and flesh, what are we to say when the institutional forms of the churches seem to become ends in themselves and so hinder both the unity and the mission of the churches? Just because any probing in this area

(Continued on page 22)

# CHRIST and the CHURCH

BY ROBERT L. CALHOUN



Dr. Calhoun, a distinguished church historian, reported to the Oberlin Conference on the nature of Jesus Christ and the nature of the church in regard to the Christian understanding of unity. His report was the longest one of the Conference and for lack of space, only the second half—that on the church—is presented here.

IN what has been said of the Christian understanding of God and of human response, the Church has been noticed more than once. It might well have appeared much more often, as the community within which all Christian doctrine develops. That matrix, of course, that underlies our theological perspective is the Church as living reality, not a specific doctrine of the Church. Such a doctrine, to which we now turn, belongs within the perspective and is largely determined by it. In the précis that follows, we shall look at the Church in two aspects: as "new creation," and as growing community.

These aspects are not separable, either in time or in essential meaning. We must not think that the Church is first, at some particular moment, a new creation, and only after that a growing community: it is both, at every moment of its earthly career. Similarly we must not suppose that these two terms refer exclusively, the one to what God does, the other to what man does, in the Church's life: both God and man are involved in all that the Church is and does.

"New creation" and "growing community" specify two perspectives in which the single complex being of the Church may conveniently be examined, the one giving especial (but

not exclusive) attention to what God has done, is doing, and will do, the other similarly to the doings of men, without any attempt to draw a boundary line between them.

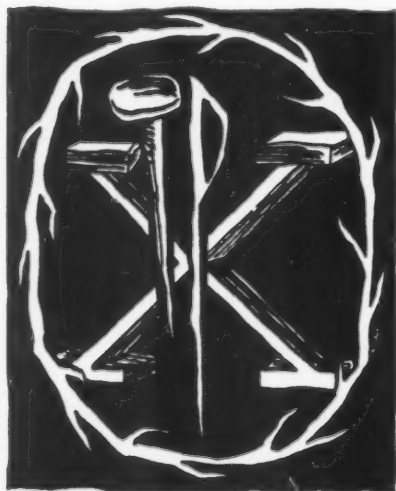
## THE CHURCH AS NEW CREATION IN HISTORY

The primary reality that brings the Christian Church into being is two-sided: God's act and man's response. The basic truth is set out briefly and clearly in the Johannine prologue: "The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world . . . yet the world knew him not. . . . But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God; born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God." Here the initiative is unmistakably God's and not man's. "The light" that comes into the world is the eternal Son, the ever-active Word, God's wisdom and power, by whom the world is made and the mind of man filled with the gift of reason; yet all too often ignored or rejected by his own, even after he entered visibly into man's plight, incarnate in Jesus Christ. But to those in every age who responded in faith he granted another gift: to be not only rational creatures but "children of God," not by physical ancestry or

natural inclination, nor by social contract, but by God's gracious act.

Essentially the same view is spelled out with express reference to the Church in the late letter to the Ephesians. Here the central figure of Jesus Christ is explicitly backed by the purpose, power and grace of the Father, and the living presence of the Holy Spirit. God's initiative and man's response bring the community of believers into being, and for the Christian Church God's act centers in Jesus Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit.

We may regard this believing community strictly as the Christian body that began its earthly life after Jesus' death and resurrection. Or like Paul we may trace it back to the covenant with Abraham as man of faith; or like Augustine we may see it taking shape from the beginning of man's life on earth, under God's providence and the leading of Word and Spirit. It is no accident that in the Johannine prologue, those "who received him, who believed in his name," are spoken of before the incarnation; and that the author of Acts 10 has Peter, reluctant as he had been to visit Cornelius, the Gentile captain, acknowledge: "I truly perceive that God shows no partiality, but in every nation any one who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him." If the believing community be understood in this wider sense, it is not less truly a new creation: new in kind rather than simply in date, an earnest of God's creative purpose to "make all things news."



However broadly or narrowly the believing community be understood, it has by its very nature the ambivalence of all historical reality. God is faithful, but man is variable. Even in his best moments he is finite and fallible, and most of the time he is not at his best. In both individual and corporate response to God's holy presence, he betrays the imperfections of his spatially and temporally restricted, biologically and socially conditioned, insecure and sin-scarred existence.

It is the grace of God, not the goodness of man, that keeps the Church, more than any other historical, institutional community, open toward heaven. This is another way of saying that the existence of the Church is eschatologically as well as historically determined. The Church of the Lord's purpose and of our hope, to be "presented before him in splendor, without spot or wrinkle," is most naturally to be understood as the Church fulfilled beyond the end of earthly history. To this issue we must return in due course.

Meanwhile, we shall do well to examine briefly the rich characterization of the Church in the New Testament. Both descriptive references and interpretative figures abound. We may begin with the primary name taken directly from the Greek Old Testament that served most early Christians as Scripture: *ekklesia*, an assembly summoned into being from among men and nations by the word of God. In accord with the Johannine passage on the coming of the Light, this assembly differed from the ethnic churches bound together by blood-kinship, and from all simply cultural or voluntary religious associations.

Its charter was a divine calling, decisively embodied in Jesus Christ. Moreover, it was not a loose aggregation of individuals, but an inwardly united community with the powerful sense of corporate identity and individual involvement that was so characteristic of Old Testament religion. The Church was but *one*, though its members were many and diverse. There are, of course, references, to "churches" (*ekklesiai*); but it seems

generally agreed that these passages have essentially the same meaning as such phrases as "the church of the Thessalonians," or "the church of God which is at Corinth," or "to Nympha and the church in her house." The Church is one and the same, whether a congregation be assembled in Thessalonica or in Corinth or in a Laodicean home.

This one community is further characterized by a profusion of interpretative figures, which in spite of their variety help to build up a broadly coherent view.\* We may notice five groups of such figures, and the facets they contribute to the total portrait.

1 The Church is, first of all, a *chosen* community. It is God's people, over which he reigns, or his anointed one for him. It is a new Israel, "the twelve tribes in the dispersion," "Abraham's offspring," "like Isaac, children of promise," born of a new covenant. It is God's flock, whose "chief shepherd" is Jesus Christ. It is an elect company of both Jews and Gentiles, whom God chose "in Christ . . . before the foundation of the world," "whose names are in the book of life." Each of these figures is elaborated, varied, and repeated in ways far too numerous to list. They are paralleled and strengthened by other figures that stress yet more powerfully the intimate personal relations into which the Church is drawn by God's choosing. It is "the household of God," and its members are "heirs of the kingdom," "children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ," his "brothers."

Most daring of all these figures of election, reminiscent of the great prophetic images of Yahweh as the husband of Israel, is the image (tentative in Ephesians, climactic in the Apocalypse) of the Church as the bride of Christ, chosen, beloved, and sanctified at great cost. Basic to all the figures just noticed is the concept of divine election: God has chosen us, not the other way about.

2 Next comes a group of images

\* Especial acknowledgment here is due to a widely used unpublished study prepared by Professor Paul Minear in 1955, for the Theological Commission on Christ and the Church.



representing the Church as a *holy* community. She is not only elect, called, chosen. She is the corporate assembly of "the saints," often called "they who are sanctified"; of "those that believe"; she is "the household of faith." Nay more, the Church is "the temple of God," in which God's Spirit dwells, a temple that is holy; and not a temple but "a royal priesthood, a holy nation," "a spiritual house, . . . a holy priesthood." So elaborately is a variant of this theme worked out in the letter to the Hebrews that it forms, with the covenant motif, a large part of that sizable epistle. The Church here is not temple or priesthood, but again a covenanted people and household whose "great high priest" by appointment of God is "Jesus, the Son of God," "the mediator of a new covenant." It is "a better covenant," under which there is only one sacrifice for sins: "when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God," and by his sacrifice "we have been sanctified . . . once for all."

So sternly is this insistence on sanctity maintained that any lapse into the apostasy of deliberate sin after baptism means no hope of further repentance, "but a fearful prospect of judgment, and a fury of fire." For this writer, and in somewhat milder terms for the author of I John, the holiness of the Church entails the sinlessness of all its members.

3 A familiar group of images stress the *oneness* of the Church as a closely knit, living whole. Here belong the many passages, often descriptive rather than figurative, that center about the basic theme of *koinonia*, communion, participation—too often feebly translated "fellowship," which for present-day readers misses almost the whole meaning of such powerful phrases as "called into the *koinonia* of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord," or "the *koinonia* of the Holy Spirit"; or "that you may have *koinonia* with us; and our *koinonia* is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." Such expressions stress oneness, not mere togetherness; but not identity. With them belong the images of living vine and branches and the olive tree whose



branches, natural or grafted, are "holy" because "the root is holy." Here too belongs the familiar and striking image of the body and its diverse members: the body that is one not despite but by reason of the ordered diversity of form and function of hand, foot, eye, and ear. This figure is not uniformly but freely and variously used.

Paul can say, "now you are the body of Christ and severally its members," or, "so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and members one of another." In Colossians the cosmic Word in whom "all things were created," who "is before all things," and in whom "all things hold together,"—"He is the head of the body, the church"; and then, "I rejoice in my sufferings . . . and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church."

So the writer to the Ephesians can say that Christ is the head from whom and into whom the whole body grows, or that Christ in glory is made "the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the completion of him who fulfills all things in all." It seems plain that this impressive figure, whose primary import in Romans and I Corinthians is clear enough, is used not with careful consistency as a technical doctrine, but as a powerful theme with free variations, some of them startling and not all of them easily harmonized.

4 This figure of the body has its place also in a fourth group of images that present the Church as a *medium*

of divine action in history. Here are the metaphors from the synoptic records, there applied to Jesus' disciples but presumably pertinent also to the growing Church: the salt of the earth, yeast in the lump, the torch in its holder giving light "to all in the house." Likewise, the Church as temple is not simply a dwelling but a place of intercession. The Church, moreover, with its worship and teaching, is a "way," and an entrance into the eternal sanctuary. Its members are slaves of God and of Christ, servants, stewards, ministers, ambassadors; they are disciples, witnesses, confessors. Through them God makes his appeal to the world of men.

It seems right to include here also the figure of the body as instrument. Its members with their varied gifts, endowed and imbued with the Holy Spirit, do their part as prophets, deacons, teachers, preachers, givers, helpers, friends in need; so the work of God and of Jesus Christ goes on among men, and not least his sacrificial suffering, in a corporate community that is ready to suffer with him for mankind.

5 Finally, the Church is an *eschatologically oriented* community. On earth it is a pilgrim people, a *diaspora*, a vast company of faithful "strangers and exiles on the earth . . . seeking a homeland" that is not here. On earth it is a rock-based fortress from which the gates of hell are being stormed. But in final truth it is "the new Jerusalem." Its members have "the Jerusalem above" as their mother, and they can endure suffering joyfully with a view to "the glory that is to be revealed." The writer to the Hebrews by a superb *tour de force* of anticipation can write: "But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels, in festal gathering, and to the assembly (*ekklesia*) of the first born who are enrolled in heaven, and to a judge who is God of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant." Thus present and future and "a kingdom that cannot be shaken" blend in ecstatic vision.

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# OUR COMMON HISTORY AS CHRISTIANS

BY ALBERT C. OUTLER



Dr. Outler's report to the Oberlin Conference came out of the study area called the Commission on Tradition and Traditions. This group is concerned with those factors in church traditions which separate denominations and those which are a common heritage.

**W**E are attempting nothing less than the reappraisal of the significance of the history of Christianity because we believe that, from such reappraisal we may recover a sense of our common Christian history as a vital force in all our present searchings for unity.

Our project is not merely an affair for historians, however. It asks of every Christian, who is even dimly aware of the historical continuity of the Christian community from New Testament times down to our own, this question: What is the present meaning, to you and your fellow Christians, of this vast and baffling heritage of nineteen centuries?

This question arises, in one form or another, at every turn in our ecumenical conversations, and a lack of well-founded answers to it is at least part of the difficulty in most ecumenical negotiations. Thus, we believe that, like all the other study commissions of Faith and Order, we have a theme that concerns all Christians who acknowledge our Lord's imperative that those who bear his name shall share in his *koinonia*. Hence our hope that we may have your interest and aid—and that our project may become a general concern in the churches.

Every ecumenical gathering presents a strange and painful anomaly. We are here as Christians who recognize our oneness in Christ and our dividedness in the

churches. We would not be here unless we already knew that the bonds that unite us are stronger than the bars that separate us. And yet we also would not be here unless we were aware that the unity we seek is something far richer and more vital than the unity we already have. We have uneasy consciences about our distance from each other; we feel *some* pain and frustration that we cannot enter directly into full communion with each other—and this is true even of those who withhold their communion from others. And yet most of us have good consciences about our divisions, too. For they represent concerns about the Christian Gospel to which we feel we must be faithful even at the cost of estrangement from some of our Christian brethren.

We feel the scandal of disunity and we acknowledge the divine imperative to community. But we are also committed to the essentials of the Gospel truth, as we have received them. We cannot surrender any essential element in the Gospel as the price of unity—and we will resist the imposition of any nonessential as if it belonged to the essence of the Gospel and the Church. We are sincere in our ecumenical profession. But what price unity? And what assurance do we have that the unity *we* seek is the unity *God* wills for his people?

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It is possible, if we speak in general enough terms, to describe the nature of the unity we are seeking. What we are after is a *community* (a *koinonia*) of Christians, who have, among them, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one eucharist and one mission—a community in which all who confess our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior have a responsible place and a true belonging. We are seeking a *community* of Christian faith and teaching, of hope and expectation, of worship and mission. Yet, for the life of us, we cannot frame the formulae by which this *koinonia* may be achieved. Some of us are rather impatient that this should be so. We are, we think, ready for union now—and we are offended by those who reject our own eager, openhearted advances on the ground that, in their eyes, our doctrines are not pure enough or our sacraments are defective or irregular. And some of us are very patient about the situation as it is—so patient, indeed, that one wonders if they are not a little pleased that God seems to move slowly in such affairs that they are unlikely to suffer any drastic change in their traditions in their own lifetime.

I have a vivid memory of an incident at Lund when things had got sticky in our Section, and we were all being very “confessional” and defensive. I felt impelled to complain of this deadlock in what I supposed was a tone of righteous indignation. It was the late, beloved Pierre Maury who replied to my outburst—and afterwards I knew what it was to have been dealt with by a saint. He spoke, with deep feeling of *la tristesse oecumenique*—the ecumenical sadness—that Christians feel who see their eager will to unity frustrated. But then he reminded us that progress in this cause is never gained by votes or victories in debate. Divided Christians are brought together by the inner, imperceptible changes wrought by the Holy Spirit in the hearts and minds of men who are centered on their common Lord and mindful of their common history in the Gospel. Once said, it seemed self-evident. But it is easily forgotten and bears repetition.

We must face this ecumenical anomaly *together*—for when we are apart, it is all too easy to pass it by as we press on to our urgent business in our ecclesiastical Jerichos. We have come here to speak and to listen; to be led, to be changed—but only by the Spirit who testifies to the Lordship of Christ and our oneness in him. And if we *are* deeply changed (in the literal sense of *metanoësis*), we may then become agents of change in our churches. And if *this* happens, Oberlin will mark the breakthrough of the ecumenical movement into the broad mid-range of American Christianity, and a much-needed new frontier in our search for unity will have been opened up.

Some such perspective as this guides the work of the Theological Study Commissions—and it is in some such light as this that our several projects are properly to be understood and evaluated. In each instance, the common aim is to find a way toward the unity we seek by penetrating into the meaning of the unity we have.

At Oberlin we are representatives of and spokesmen for a hundred different traditions—and we call them all “Christian,” in *some* sense or other. But in order to converse intelligibly with Christians of different backgrounds than ours, we must be able to stand both in and out of our own traditions and move at least a little way into the *other* traditions. Our ability—and our disposition—to do this is one of the basic measures of our real catholicity. But how *can* we do this? What makes it possible? What do our plural traditions have in common, that warrants our calling them “Christian,” in *some* sense or other? The right answers to these questions would go a long way in reducing the ecumenical anomaly—and it is just such answers that our Commission is groping for.

Our problem can be defined in yet another way, by asking a different sort of question about our conference; how did we all *get* to Oberlin, anyhow? Would it interest you if it were possible to reverse the reel of church history and run it backwards—slowly enough so that we could trace the maze of pathways that now converge on this particular occasion, this unique *kairos*? What a panorama it would make—and what a jumble! Each of us could trace his own tradition’s pathway back through time, but this still would not bring us all out at one spot and one time when there was only one, single, historic tradition to which some Christians have clung, without any change whatever, and from which the rest of us have fallen away into plural, schismatic traditions. Historical inquiry simply cannot discover such a single, unaltered tradition in the historical experience of the Christian community. This is one reason why so much church history is so heavily partisan or so boldly relativistic.

We all know how it is to live inside our own familiar, partisan traditions. I know my own Methodist tradition, after a fashion. But do I know much about yours, and yours? And do I really understand my own until I have also understood yours? And, vice versa, do you really understand yours until you have understood the rest of us well enough to recognize what we do (or could) have in common with you and what we have only to ourselves? But even if we all sincerely tried to do this retracing of our histories, we would still have a problem. We cannot, on order, cancel our separate histories in favor of a common history which we have not actually experienced. These separate histories of ours have done their work and now they constitute an unavoidable part of our present anomaly. The Methodist history I can trace and the Anglican history my Anglican brethren can trace constitute both a bond and a bar between us. I cannot annul this, nor can they. Nor can either ask the other to repudiate his own

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# institutionalism in relation to UNITY and DISUNITY

BY WALTER G. MUELDER

Dr. Muelder's report to the Oberlin Conference seeks to tell us about the sociological factors which both separate denominations and bring them together. As this report points out, some of these sociological factors are more important in separating Christians than are certain doctrinal matters.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONALISM

MORE than doctrine divides the churches. This fact, commonly recognized in the ecumenical movement, provides the background of the work of the Commission on Institutionalism. The study of institutionalism concentrates on but a small part of that large number of social, economic, political and cultural factors which beset the efforts at expressing the unity of the church. These factors—always operative, sometimes decisive—have been largely neglected by the Faith and Order program as a whole.

This neglect points up the well-known self-sufficiency and introversion of much theologizing, both traditional and current. The neglect of a serious study by theologians of institutional factors may itself reflect their assumptions about the nature of Christianity and the interrelations of church and society. We may ask, "Is this neglect a symptom of the subtle docetism which remains such a pervasive and persuasive temptation in Christian thought?" The situation certainly reflects the incompatibility of temper and research methods still existing between theology and sociology; their

blessed marriage is still part of the eschatological hope.

In its report to the Commission on Faith and Order in 1956 we traced briefly the repeated attempts made by the Commission to focus attention on the indisputable ingredient of the social and cultural factors in all interchurch relations. In preparation for the Edinburgh Conference in 1937, an American group under Dean Sperry produced a pioneering report on "The Nontheological Factors in the Making and Unmaking of Church Union." It shared the not infrequent fate of preparatory reports in receiving hardly any attention at the Conference, and even less afterwards. The reappraisal of the ecumenical situation after the second world war—including reflections on the Amsterdam Assembly of 1948—made it evident that a new inquiry was called for.

In June, 1949, Professor C. H. Dodd, in a now famous letter, strikingly highlighted the fact of unavowed motivations and unconscious assumptions in interchurch attitudes. This letter was followed by an international consultation, and the ensuing report,

"Social and Cultural Factors in Church Divisions," was presented to the Lund Conference on Faith and Order in 1952. Here the problem received considerable attention and the Conference recommended it for intensive study. Indeed, in the revised constitution of the Commission it was given a firm place among the basic terms of reference for study by Faith and Order.

In 1953 the Faith and Order secretary was instructed to circularize universities and theological seminaries "with a view to promoting research in concrete situations where social and cultural factors operated." One of the difficulties which presents itself is the wide range of these factors and the tendency to list or compile a score or more that in one way or another affect ecumenical negotiations. I refer to language, nationalism, race, class, power, establishment, polity, denominational size, and the like. The very large scope of these problems made for diffusion rather than for concentrated analysis.

At the Davos (Switzerland) meeting in 1955, the Working Committee

motive





felt that the time had come to focus on institutionalism as a fruitful point of attack. This subject was taken, not because institutionalism is always the most important, but because it is found in every situation to some significant degree. Accordingly, the terms of reference for this study were defined in 1955 as follows:

To make a study of institutionalism as it affects all churches and in particular:

1. The self-criticism of churches by which they may see their own structures sociologically as well as theologically;
2. The relations both positive and negative of the churches to each other in the ecumenical conversation;
3. The pattern of church relations which is finding expression in the World Council of Churches as an institution.

When churches of varying traditions engage each other in a dynamic conversation they constitute an institutional threat. It is important to ex-

plore the points at which, in the development of the Ecumenical Movement, the greatest threat to institutional integrity takes place. When churches confront each other they are likely to have some projected image of what the desired form of unity will be. Many churches act as if the nature of the unity they seek were already given in their institutional self-images. We are therefore required to ask this question, "What goals or processes of mutual exploration will lift the quality of institutional participation in the World Council of Churches above the fixed images of their present existence?" The Commission is only in the early stages of its inquiries.

Before leaving this historical orientation to the work of the Commission on Institutionalism, and before taking up a definition of such terms as Institution and Institutionalism, I should like to relate the general problem of social factors to two of the Orientation Papers from Minneapolis and Durham, N. C., prepared for this Conference. Later, I shall refer to several others, since they make such significant contributions to this aspect of our common task. The reports from Minneapolis and Durham are important because of the relation of doctrinal to nondoctrinal problems.

The Minneapolis Discussion Group dealt with Doctrinal Consensus and Conflict. A wide variety of denominations was represented in this study group. Their work was focused on 5,000 responses to a check-list questionnaire, which indicated a broad homogeneity in expressions of theological faith. The group found that a kind of theological ecumenicity already exists within each of the denominations. There is considerable agreement on the nature of the church, the ground of salvation, the Person of Christ, and the Sacraments of the Lord's Supper. On four of the theological areas surveyed all the respondents could be included in The Methodist Church without increasing the diversity which is already represented by the Methodist clergy. About 94 per cent could join the Lutheran or Presbyterian churches without in-

creasing the diversity in the views of the Bible, which already exist in the clergy of these denominations. Approximately the same would be true with regard to the doctrine of Christ and the ground of salvation. About 72 per cent could be Episcopalians or Lutherans on the doctrine of the Sacrament of Baptism, and more than 95 per cent could be Presbyterians. Four or five possible positions on the Lord's Supper are taken by Episcopal clergy and these account for 96 per cent of the total responses. However, despite this statistical consensus, there is no institutional drive for organic unity.

These very interesting statistical data suggest that the differences that matter most are not theological. "It is clear," says the orientation paper "that neither clergy nor laity feel any great urge toward organizational unity." Both clergy and laity reject an interpretation of Christian unity which means "... the gathering of all Christians into one visible church organization" (all except 7.87 per cent of the clergy and 11.67 per cent of laity). Both reject also the other extreme, that of "... a spiritual oneness without interest in organizational co-operation" (all except 3.7 per cent of clergy and 3.06 per cent of the laity). However, 50.26 per cent of the laity and 36.57 per cent of the clergy chose "... a spiritual oneness indifferent to organizational forms but based on agreement as to the fundamentals of Christian faith." Almost a fourth of the laity chose "... the maintenance of various denominations, but each mutually respecting one another's validity as churches." Thirty per cent of the clergy checked "... a spiritual oneness manifested partially in organizational co-operation." It is significant, we may add, that only the Episcopal clergy gave preference to "one visible church organization," but their lay members distributed their choices according to the general pattern of all lay choices. From an institutional perspective it is interesting that the denominations not affiliated with the ecumenical movement do not differ significantly from

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## the shape of the church's response in

Dr. Sittler's report to the Oberlin Conference concerns worship, one of the most obvious and important of the study areas affecting church unity.

BY JOSEPH SITTLER



### THE PROBLEM: A DESCRIPTION

**F**AITH and Order created a Commission on Worship in acknowledgment of a fact. The fact is that the way Christian people worship is declarative of what they believe. This declaration may well be made in worship at a depth and with a fulness seldom attained in credal propositions.

Early in Faith and Order inquiries it became apparent that formal comparative examination of the confessional and other utterances of the churches was not adequate for a responsible understanding either of what these churches affirmed in common or asserted in difference. There is a worship of the one God by his one people; that is why a Commission on Worship is possible and necessary. And there is a wild and bewildering variety in ways of worship by this one people: that is why the work of this Commission is difficult.

It is not necessary to go into great detail concerning the present constitution of the Commission as reorganized following the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Evanston. It is enough for our present purpose to remember that three Commissions in widely separated and quite different areas were established: one in Europe, one in East Asia, one in

North America. While some preliminary correspondence has been carried on with the European Commission, and while all of us in the area-Commission are aware of and grateful for the vigorous and productive work of the East Asian group—this is a discussion of matters which have arisen in the two meetings which have been held under my chairmanship here in North America.

One cannot get very far in constructive thought about a problem until the nature of the problem has been clearly exposed. Our work of exposure is by no means complete; but certain aspects are clear enough that I can point them out in the confidence that any concerned listener will recognize what I am talking about.

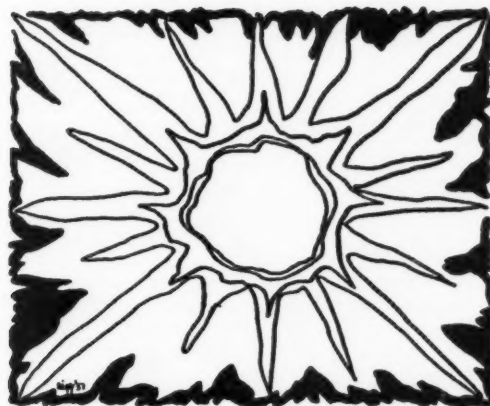
The term worship presents a problem. At the second meeting of our Commission Professor Leonard Trinterud, with characteristic bluntness and clarity, excised this particular problem in these words. "Our English word 'worship' misstates the whole content and significance of that which in the New Testament is called 'the service of God,' i.e., *leiturgia*, *latría*, *diakonia*, and their respective related terms.

"In the New Testament these terms refer normatively to 'serving God,' 'do-

motive



# WORSHIP



ing the will of God,' in a great variety of ways most of which are without cultic significance or form, and which refer principally to that which is done for and among men—not to something done to or for God in a sanctuary. The New Testament knows nothing of a *leiturgia*, *latría*, *diakonia* which is localized in an edifice, or to fixed times of occurrence. These terms refer to the whole round of the Christians' ordinary life as people."

Professor Trinterud made his second point as follows: "Acts such as prayer, thanksgiving, breaking of bread, are regarded in the New Testament as but an aspect of the 'service of God,' and that not the controlling or central aspect. That which in the New Testament is central and controlling in the 'service of God,' is the presence of Christ, the Head of the Church, in the Holy Spirit given to the Church. The living Christ, thus present, directs, guides, builds up the church, and thus it 'serves God.' Our ideas of worship are too often rooted in the situation of the people of God before the Resurrection and Pentecost. There, indeed, priests, strictly so-called, performed cultic acts, in properly consecrated sanctuaries, acts addressed to God on behalf of the people. But the new aeon comes when the promise of God has been fulfilled, when the redeeming work of God has been done in Christ, and when the Holy Spirit has been given to all believers. God's people are now related to him in a new and

living way previously only promised. So also, God is now present among his people, by the Holy Spirit, a manner of presence which previously was but a promise.

"We cannot discuss 'worship' as though we were still in the old aeon, on the other side of Pentecost and the Resurrection."

One can disagree with a great deal of what Professor Trinterud says; but such disagreement has little to do with the size or importance of the problem thus explicated. Our Commission has been sufficiently impressed to agree upon the following:

a. A thoroughgoing biblical inquiry into the relation between the "service of God" and what we have come to call the "service of worship" by the congregation of believers assembled in a specific place, has got to be undertaken. The enormous exegetical ferment which has been engendered by recent decades of brilliant and notion-cracking biblical studies makes it quite impossible to derive schematically neat ideas about worship from the New Testament community. Some old certainties have been made untenable, and a confusing and exciting richness of life has been exposed.

b. The interdependence of the work of the Commission on Worship and the Commission on Christ and the Church is transparently clear. Just as the doctrine of the Church was at Lund shifted to a position under the doctrine of Christ, so also we think,

the inquiry into worship must be illuminated from the same center.

A corollary of these convictions has shaped our Commission's understanding of its task—and it may be expressed here as a kind of an aside. If any of us came to this study as liturgiologists, or were under the impression that by becoming such we could best advance our work, we have long since laid such notions aside. There is a place and a useful function to be served by such inquiries, but none of us is disposed to interpret our directive in such terms. Descriptive and analytical inquiries into ways of worship must follow a clear understanding of the nature and scope and meaning of worship. If liturgical considerations precede such studies, the deeper question is either dismissed or too quickly set in doctrinaire terms.

c. Inquiry into the nature of Christian worship of God has, particularly in North America, got to operate in a sphere of discourse already occupied. The name of the occupant, in very many of our congregations, is the psychology of worship. This strange roomer got into and established himself in the living room of church practice in roughly the following way: that people do worship God is an observable fact; and every fact is permeable to psychological inquiry. Psychology does not operate from hand to mouth; it has either open or unavowed presuppositions about the structure and dynamics of the psyche. If, then, in

worship people are in some way or other in search of a relationship to the Ineffable there must be ways which lubricate and ways which hinder this search. The human animal is influenced by setting, accompaniment, symbols, silence, the gravity of statement and response, the solidarity-producing impact of solemn music, etc.

So it has happened that experts in worship have arisen among us. All assume that the purpose of public worship is to create a mood; and he is the next admirable as the leader of worship who has mastered finesse in the mood-setting devices made available by the application of psychological categories. Thence has flowed that considerable and melancholy river of counsel whereby one may learn how to organize an assault upon the cognitive and critical faculties of the mind, how to anesthetize into easy seduction the nonverbalized but dependable anxieties that roam about in the solitary and collective unconscious, and how to conduct a brain-washing under the presumed banner of the Holy Ghost.

That this is what worship means in thousands of congregations is certainly true; it is equally true that the Scriptures know nothing about such ideas. When we are enjoined to be still and know that God is God, the presupposition is not that stillness is good and speech is bad—but rather that God is *prior* to man and all God-man relationships are out of joint if that is not acknowledged.

d. The third problem of which we have become acutely aware is a big and general problem; and I cannot advance toward a description of it until I shove out of the way an unhappy term which is well on the way to ecumenical canonization. It is a nontheological factor! Which is saying an unintelligible thing. For there are no nontheological factors in human existence. To suppose that there are is to misunderstand both the scope and intention of Christian theology and the actualities of human thought and feeling.

This tough third problem, then, can best be delineated by starting with a proposition: that language is the pri-

mary creation and carrier of culture, and it follows the career of man's culture with absolute seriousness. Language, that is to say, in the structure, scope, and content of it, is an obedient transcript of what a people understands itself and its world to be like. When that world-understanding is mono-dimensional language loses its opulence. When that world-meaning becomes a plane without extension or depth, language becomes designative and thin.

I cannot here investigate why language in our time has become flat, nonallusive, and impoverished, but simply to observe that it *has* and ask what this means for our churches as they seek to recover ways of worship which shall be more adequate to the object of worship, and more fully reflective of the long history of the people of God in their life of worship.

It is strange that this problem, so widely acknowledged and so profoundly disturbing outside the



churches, has, so far as I know, not been systematically discussed among us. This is the more strange, because the more deeply a concern is loaded with history, the past, things accomplished long ago—the more a church understands herself as a “pilgrim people of God”—that is, called, continuous, on the way, starting with a constitutive deed and living out her life in a hope which is both a given and an awaited consummation—the more clearly the church understands *that*, the more embarrassing her problem with a flat and impoverished language. Just as our Christology becomes richer, our ecclesiology more organic, our anthropology deeper—our common language, the cultural instrument that must do the work of acknowledgment, praise and interpretation, is shrinking in obedience to a diminished realm of meaning.

The gravity of rhythmic speech is the mark of a culture that carries its past livingly in its present experience. Rhythmic speech is the outward and visible sign of rootedness. Every society has had its rhetoric of remembrance. “Come now, let us bring our reasoning to a close, saith the Lord. . . . Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. . . . I am the Lord thy God that brought thee out of that great and terrible wilderness. . . . I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine.”

In the Scriptures each moment is heavy with all past moments; for the God of the moment is the Creator of the continuity. The old prayers of the church understood this so well and felt it so deeply that every one of them jump into the moments’ petitions after a running start in the eventful history of the people of God. “O God, who didst teach the hearts of Thy faithful people by sending to them the light of Thy Holy Spirit: Grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in His holy comfort. . . .” This is great rhetoric because it roots the life of the moment in the grace of the past; it evokes a response in depth because it is not only a report, but a reverberation. It is an expectant episode in a people’s life because it is a note in

ancient and continuing music. It is as big as the heart because it is as old as the people of God.

How many times, in reading the liturgy for the Holy Communion, I have felt both exultation and despair at the moment of the *Sanctus*: “Therefore with Angels and Archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify Thy glorious Name; evermore praising Thee, and saying: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth. . . .” Exalted because in this language this place and time and company of momentary lives are interpreted and blessed within the scope of an eternal action of God, released from the tyranny of death, and what Dylan Thomas has so movingly alluded to when he laments that

*. . . time in all its tuneless turning  
allows  
So few, and such morning  
songs. . . .*

But also in despair for to the flattened speech of our time Angels and Archangels are rather ridiculous symbols—material, so to speak, nonfissionable by contemporary definition of fact.

Strange things, nevertheless, are happening in the present practice of language. Just when one is sodden with despair over the possibility of making alive the massive biblical symbol of *fire*, for instance—

*Come Holy Ghost, our souls inspire  
And lighten with celestial fire;*

Just then man does such things with language as to reinvest this symbol with meanings, and dreamed of meanings, of terrible force. The immediate referent of *fire* in 1957 is not the celestial fire of God’s descending and recreating Ardor—but a monstrous shape like a death-dealing mushroom. And out of this unimaginable hell a man envisions again an unbelievable grace, and writes in language which wildly fuses destroying atom bombs and the descending Holy Ghost

*The dove descending breaks the air*

*With flame of incandescent terror  
Of which the tongues declare  
The one discharge from sin and error  
The only hope, or else despair  
Lies in the choice of pyre or pyre  
To be redeemed from fire by fire.*

*Who then devised the torment?  
Love.*

*Love is the unfamiliar Name  
Behind the hands that wave  
The Intolerable shirt of flame  
Which human power cannot remove.  
We only live, only suspire  
Consumed by either fire or fire.*

—T. S. Eliot

Such speech judges one’s tepid unbelief in the power of the Holy Spirit of God, reminds us that the aggressive and ingenious love that can make the stones cry out, can penetrate positivistic language too, and betimes torment its flatness into a kind of “negative” praise.

It is therefore proper to our study of worship to inquire what this revolution in language means for the public worship of our churches, to ask whether perhaps it is not a task of contemporary obedience and praise to find fresh forms of statement whereby intelligibly to set forth ancient facts and encounters. It may well be that we are entering upon a period in the church’s life wherein men’s minds must be shocked open to entertain the suspicion that there are realms of meaning, promise, and judgment which ensconce God’s incarnated action for their vague disquietudes.

#### THE PROBLEM: CONSTRUCTIVE ANALYSIS

There has never been a church which has not declared its faith and order to be continuous with the Apostolic tradition. Some churches have affirmed this explicitly in their confessions or other basic writings; others have unfolded their life, eschewing confessional statements, but claiming to celebrate this tradition in teaching, order, and piety.

This fact opens up a double way to make an entrance into the construc-

(Continued on page 26)



## the BISHOP JOHANNES LILJE: way to unity

Bishop Lilje of Germany gave one of the most exciting addresses at the Oberlin Conference. While representatives of the Greek Orthodox faith took exception to it, most of the delegates, representing thirty-eight other denominations, gave enthusiastic approval.

**W**HEN the great German philosopher Hegel, shortly before his death, heard about Christian world missions, he exclaimed: "This is the most significant event of our time." A hundred years later, one of the greatest Christian leaders of modern church history, William Temple, at his consecration as Archbishop of Canterbury, made a similar statement in his inaugural address: "The rise of the ecumenical movement is the greatest event in modern church history." This statement is doubtless true. There is scarcely another movement within the Christian Church which could compare with the ecumenical movement in vigor and comprehensiveness. A burning desire for greater Christian unity has spread and is spreading throughout Christendom like an irresistible all-consuming prairie fire.

More than thirty years of prayer and labor, study and organization, have gone into the ecumenical movement. Christian leaders whom we shall never forget paved the way. Christian people of other lands joined the procession. Ancient churches, like those of Southern India, seemed to emerge out of the past into new life. New churches in Asia and Africa came into existence. Both helped to give new dimensions to the horizon of Christianity. A rich and wonderful heritage has been

transmitted to us out of these thirty years.

But today is a new day, different and challenging. What is true of the Church, is true of the ecumenical movement also: no Church, old and rich though her tradition may be, can afford today to live upon her past history or accomplishments alone; she has to face the present. Even so the ecumenical movement, though only a few decades old, dare not, must not become static. Our world has changed rapidly and radically in these thirty years. The first half of this present century was filled with bloodshed, cruel wars and human tragedies which far exceed the experience of previous generations. We face a totally new situation.

We must rethink our ecumenical activities. If there ever was a time in which the unity of the Christian Church, unity in thought and action, was urgently needed it is today. This means that we have to rethink our whole Christian status, our Christian message and our Christian way of living, in the light of greater Christian unity.

### THE UNITY WE HAVE ACHIEVED

This would not be a true and faithful account if we did not start with

the unity that actually has been achieved. At the outset we categorically repudiate the charge that the ecumenical movement is something fine and artificial, something imposed upon our congregations from without but not really known by them. I would rather assert that within the last generation, especially since World War II, there has been a steady growth of what I should like to call ecumenical consciousness. In particular this is true of the Christian Churches of Europe, especially in the countries most afflicted by the war. The people in these countries—I mean the plain ordinary Christians—have realized as never before what the world-wide community of Christians can mean in this troubled world. They did not need intricate theological explanations concerning ecclesiology and ecumenicity but spontaneously, immediately grasped that reality of the Church Universal which exists in and by faith and which acts through love.

It is impossible to retreat behind this line. One cannot erase the memory of unforgettable experiences. We dare not ignore the ardent desire of so many plain Christians for a greater, more visible and more effective union of Christians and the Christian churches.

I should like to add one statement about our relationship to the Church

motive



of Rome. Where does she stand in relation to the ecumenical movement? We know that for centuries this Church has said over and over again: "The only possible way to unity is for all the other churches to return to the bosom of the Church of Rome." We know, of course, that many Roman Catholics individually possess strong ecumenical sentiments and exercise friendliness and even Christian love toward non-Catholics; we know this spirit, so nobly represented in Abbe Couturier's phrase: "Unity at the time which God sets and with the means he gives." But it is perfectly obvious that this is not the ultimate attitude of Rome herself. Over against Protestantism with its manifold divisions Rome maintains with monotonous repetition that real and visible unity can be achieved only under the Pope. There seems to be no doubt that the ecumenical movement compares favorably with this rigidly inflexible attitude.

It may not be amiss to call to mind that Protestantism which is so frequently blamed for having sown the seed of disunity within Christendom, was neither the first nor the greatest schism which Rome had to suffer; the great schism of 1054—900 years before Evanston!—separated the large and important body of the Eastern Church from its Latin lord. And it is equally important to note that Protestantism, so often criticized for its tendency toward divisiveness, has in the ecumenical movement shown a noteworthy amount of flexibility, vitality and cohesiveness; moreover, while steadily advancing all along the line, the ecumenical movement has exercised a theological and doctrinal vigilance which is one of its most attractive and fruitful features.

Ecumenical consciousness is closely related to ecumenical action. The spontaneous desire of Christians to help each other does not only affect the receiving partner but it has far-reaching effects also upon those who are asked to give, act and sacrifice. Especially those churches which, under God, had the good fortune to change from the status of receiving churches to that of giving ones, ex-

perienced with unambiguous clarity that it is part of the full stature of Christianity to learn, to think, to plan, to decide and, most of all, to act in terms of Christian love. This, too, is part of the ecumenical reality within the churches. For love transcends all boundaries, including those of confessions and denominations.

I want to underscore once again the importance of the common process of theological thinking which has been going on for thirty years. In some respects this is the most tangible result of the ecumenical encounter of our generation. A number of outstanding publications is excellent proof of the fruitfulness of this world-wide exchange of theological thoughts.

It is necessary to mention a fourth element of the unity already achieved. Christianity throughout the world has regained a new sense of responsibility in public life. This is especially true in the sphere of politics, domestic as well as international. In a manner nearly unknown in the last two centuries, Christianity has learned anew to raise its prophetic voice with reference to the burning issues of political and social life. In facing some of the major crises of the political developments of recent years, Christianity has learned soberly and realistically to weigh the facts involved and yet vigorously and fearlessly to proclaim the will of God and Christian standards. Experience has grown in this realm, and the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, CCIA, has developed into an excellent instrument for handling those problems which arise continually in this turbulent world of ours.

#### THE UNITY WE SEEK

Christianity has developed a distinctive sense of ecumenicity. But still we face the question how to go on. Can we go on in the same way as the last twenty years? Would we want to do so? Or do we have to rethink radically our whole ecumenical approach? Have we gone in the wrong direction? Must we retrace our steps?

These questions are not rhetorical. There is, for instance, one fundamental presupposition which every-

body seems to take for granted. That is the question whether we should have ecumenicity in the form of an organization. Do we have to organize at all? Is the One, Holy, Apostolic and Catholic Church a matter of organization? Is the Church that we confess in our creed something which, even in part, can organize at all? Even in a more limited way this problem exists. Is it necessary for us to try to achieve uniformity in worship, doctrinal expression, church administration and the like? Is there any fundamental reason, based on Scripture or common Christian experience, which makes this indispensable?

If we take these questions seriously, then one thing is certain: the fundamental unity of the Church is something very different from formal uniformity. There must be a unity which goes far beyond our attempts to organize. The real unity of the Church must not be organized, but exercised.

This has to do with the nature of



the Church. All Christians agree that the One, Holy, Catholic Church of our creed is not a human institution. She is God's creation within history. She is his chosen people. This Church exists and by her very nature she can only be one, whatever human diversities may have developed in the course of her earthly history. This statement, if true, has a number of consequences.

(a) The ultimate aim of the ecumenical movement cannot be confined to any achievement in the sphere of organization. It must be the rediscovery of the Church, her fullness and her real essence. The Church is one. No human effort is required to make her one or capable of doing so. All we have to do is to recognize and understand anew this basic fact.

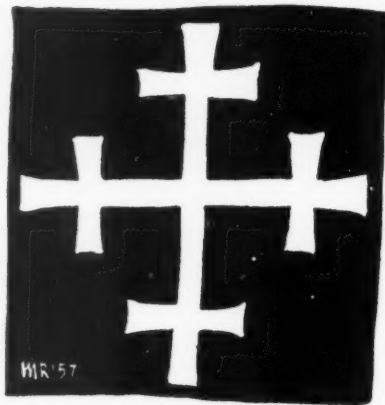
Now this is just the sore point in all our deliberations: the Church certainly does not have the appearance of being one. This precisely is the predicament which has brought us together, that countless divisions and subdivisions seem to have split the body of the Church asunder. It is very doubtful whether we can escape this depressing reality by merely pointing to beautiful theological theories. We will have to deal with this problem.

(b) Before we do so, however, we must point out a few consequences which naturally result from the statement that the unity of the Church exists now. If this be true the solution of the problem of greater Christian unity cannot be found in a simple return to Rome. This would, indeed, be far too simple. In spite of the fact that modern historical research, also on the part of Protestant scholars, has revealed that there is a great deal to be said for the unique position which in the New Testament Peter holds among the Apostles, this certainly does not include the total justification of the claims made by Peter's successors on the Papal throne. Moreover, we reject the notion that the Church needs that sort of historic guarantee of her continuity which is supposed to be given in the Apostolic succession of bishops. Even if we admit that to some churches and to some Christians this idea has a rather traditional value, we could not agree to the claim that historical episcopacy is an essential and indispensable element of the order of salvation.

But, while a return to Rome would not solve the problem, neither would the mere rejection of Roman Catholic dogma be sufficient for a real rediscovery of the Church. The true nature of the Church cannot be discovered by the method of theological limitation or negation.

(c) There is still another important aspect which must be mentioned. If we try to rediscover the Church in the midst of all our denominational differences we need an acute sense of self-criticism. We must be able with the utmost objectivity to consider the weaknesses, shortcomings and failures of our own particular church. One of

the most sinister impediments on the road to greater unity is theological *securitas*, that is, the assumption that all is well in one's own theological camp, the smug conceit that one's own denomination is superior to others, in short, confessionalistic pride. Where the sense of critical self-appraisal is underdeveloped, there the



spiritual capacity for ecumenical encounters is correspondingly weak. Here is where the nontheological factors of the lower type creep into ecumenical relations and devastate them, e.g., the idea of a socially superior Church, a scientifically advanced Church and whatever other unchristian standards of evaluation we may think of.

This, however, is one of the outstanding results of the ecumenical discussion of the past few years: no rediscovery of the Church is possible unless we place the main emphasis upon her Christocentricity. This is what we must stress, indeed: unless Christ is in the center, we have no valid point of orientation. All of us, of course, are quite willing to say so. There seems to be no disagreement at all concerning this point. Two remarks are necessary in order to save this statement from being misunderstood as a meaningless generality. The first is that our differing interpretations of Christ's person and work are precisely the sources of many of our diversities. The second point is a constructive one: no real and lasting renewal of the Church has ever taken place which was not based upon a new and comprehensive experience of Christ as the Living One.

In saying so we declare and affirm that this experience is still a possibility. If we really believe in the continuity of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, then we believe too that his Church on earth can be given a new vision of his glory.

## THE WAY TO UNITY

It is the merit of the ecumenical movement that it has developed throughout its history a number of remarkable methods for dealing with its main problems. It is in the nature of things that most of these methods are of a theological character. Though they have covered a wide field and proved to be very successful they have sometimes, on the other hand, constituted a particular danger. Still, no movement within the Church can be of any lasting effect if it is not based upon, and corrected by theology.

There have been other approaches, too. We have compared our ways of worship and discovered how much we have to learn and may actually learn from the attitude in which each individual church stands before God in adoration and confession. Finally, we have given a great deal of thought to dealing with the problems of Christian action in public and social life.

All this is not new. Still, we have to face time and again the question how we should seek unity and whether we do it in the right way. One of the peculiarities of relatively young movements is that they stagnate more quickly than many of the old traditional forms of church organization. Radical rethinking of our methods is needed. At least four important points must be considered.

(a) The work of theological research must go on in an untiring, relentless way. We dare not stop investigating the history of the Christian churches. For we must seek to understand, as clearly as we can, our common heritage and at the same time the origins of our various divisions. We cannot be satisfied with mere statements of facts. We have to explore the background and hidden motives of these divisions. We must be very precise in our differentiation between those schisms which are the result of heret-

motive



ical movements and those separations which have arisen out of obedience to the truth. We must learn to discern between the origin of denominations which have been produced by human error and even sin, and those which have attempted to restore a corrupted Church to the purity of the New Testament. Here is where we come face to face with the basic problem of all ecumenical endeavors, and it will not be easy for the scholar to make an authentic and justifiable distinction between the two.

Christian dogma, its history and its present form, will be an indispensable part of such studies. In this field, the ecumenical movement faces no particularly new task. It has to do what the Church has to do at all times, i.e., to try to present the Christian message in terms of our generation. Here the best contribution to the ecumenical task of the Church is good and sound and solid theological work done by any conscientious theologian at the desk or in his study at home. Needless to say, no theological work can be genuinely true and fruitful unless it bears fruit in the life of the congregation.

(b) The second main requirement in all ecumenical tasks is what I should like to call Christlike simplicity. I do not mean naïveté. Christian doctrine is not simple. Even the New Testament records of our Lord are not simple. Out of the simple lines of the Gospel rises the image of the Lord, of the eschatological Jesus, who is not to be grasped by human categories. The same is true of all the great doctrines of the Christian Church. For they have their origin not in the human mind but in the revelation of that God who is the inscrutable one, and who reveals himself only where and when it pleases him—*ubi et quando visum est Deo*. Nevertheless, what we need is a Christlike simplicity. It is our Christian duty to do such thorough thinking that we are able to state in crystal-clear terms what we mean. If we cannot say simply what we believe, we either do not really understand or we do not really believe what we say. In a scientific age which is accustomed to

precise statements this lucid and clear simplicity is of the utmost importance. This is a paramount task of the Church under any circumstances; but it is of the utmost importance if different Christian churches wish to cope with their disagreements in such a way that they can deliver a common witness to the world.

We use the term Christlike simplicity because Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13: 8). Truth is the same in Catholicism, Lutheranism or Congregationalism—or it is not truth. Revelation is the same in the sixteenth century as in the twentieth. Christ is the same throughout the ages. Humanly speaking, we will never be able to achieve absolute precision in our witness; but we are bound to speak as precisely as we can. We will never be able to deliver a common Christian witness to the world unless we reach out continually for this Christlike simplicity.

(c) A third requirement is what I would like to call courage of thought. This is a specific quality of the mind without which the ecumenical movement never will succeed. We need courageous thinking if we want freedom from prejudice. Every student of human nature knows the horrifying power of prejudice in human relation-

ships. Prejudice is particularly poisonous in the life and witness of the Church. Without this type of courage which, of course, is a gift of God's spirit, we will never get far in our endeavors to achieve greater unity.

But there are other weaknesses of the human mind we have to face. There is a peculiar type of intellectual laziness without which human prejudices would never be able to do as much damage as they actually do. In spite of everything the philosophers and psychologists tell us, man just does not like to think for himself. Intellectual independence seems to be one of those rare gifts which we receive only by an act of God's grace. The Christian churches will get nowhere unless they learn to act and think in this independence of mind. It is of particular importance that they do so in dealing with each other. Christian prejudices are the worst among all types of prejudices. But how vigorous they are! The subtle pride which seems to be inherent in all denominational self-assurance is one of the most serious obstacles to real Christian unity.

(d) The most important of all the requirements is the revitalization of Christian life. This goes for the individual as well as for the churches, for the preachers and teachers as well as for each congregation. If we do not even want to be renewed in our Christian life we had better give up all ecumenical efforts at once. If we are not capable of taking seriously all those who honestly and sincerely strive for a new vigorous life of obedience, if we lose the sense of repentance, if we cease to pray for a new outpouring of God's spirit, all our theological and organizational efforts will be in vain. The ultimate standard by which we have to measure the ecumenical movement of our day is certainly not its theological and administrative efficiency but only the power to help toward the renewal of the Church and of the individual Christian. Let us not strive to be better Lutherans, Episcopalians or Congregationalists, not even better members of the ecumenical movement—but let us strive to be better Christians.



## The Oberlin Conference

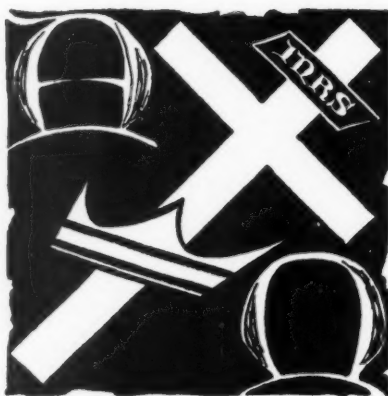
(Continued from page 6)

comes very close to the sensitive nerves of ecclesiastical tissue, Dean Muelder's study commission will be dealing with some very likely and perhaps explosive issues. But such fact-facing and truth-seeking need not be feared nor suppressed by Christians, whom the Apostles admonished as people who "can do nothing against the truth but only for the truth." (II Cor. 13:8)

IV. The fourth area of study is that of Christian worship. The various ways of worship, as well as the differing theories and doctrines underlying these diverse ways, are being examined in ways which Professor Sittler will describe. Few of us need to be reminded of the paradox of the relation of worship to unity. It is precisely in worship services that we may at time feel ourselves most distant from other churches; but it is also in the act of worship that we most genuinely apprehend our oneness as Christ's people. It is not enough for us in Faith and Order studies merely to describe and compare the visible and audible varieties of services. Again we must face the matter in common, and ask what is really constitutive and indispensable for the devotional and liturgical practices of the churches. Fortunately, Principal Chandran reports about the significant studies on worship which his Asian theological commission is pursuing.

You may well ask what these ten-year studies are likely to accomplish for Christian unity and church unity. Here are two comments on this query.

First, these theological commissions have not set out to solve problems, to balance complicated ecclesiological equations, to prescribe neat and painless resolutions of the existing tensions between churches. By this I do not mean that they are not expecting to discover new insights or record further progress in understanding. One of the most provocative assertions of the Lund Conference Report was this: "There are truths about the nature of God and his Church which will remain forever closed to us unless we act together in obedience to the unity which is already ours." These Faith and Order studies are just acts of obedience on the basis of this given unity. And though they are not expecting to untie a series of Gordian knots, the members of the eight commissions, having some of the best minds in the various confessions, will certainly give help and guidance to all the churches in their quest to understand



God's will for the unity, life and mission of his Church.

The second and greater value of our studies lies in the influence they have upon the thinking of all who take part in any way. It may be true, as someone remarked, that intellectuals today are paid more and heeded less than ever before. Theologians are intellectuals. And a random sampling of sermons heard in any city may vindicate the latter part of that observation, although the professors may question the former. In any case, we may still assume that theologians have a distinctive influence upon Christians' thought and attitudes. And because of the recent spread of ecumenical studies, the men who teach on theological faculties, write books of scholarship and instruction, preach and lecture, study and ponder, are becoming less disposed than before to think, write and speak as though their own denomination or tradition or theological circle were the only sphere in which God's truth might be received. I recall a book by a famous German Lutheran theologian which purported to be a general systematic treatment of the whole Christian faith. In its four-page index of names cited I discovered only two Anglo-Saxons—Shakespeare and Milton. It is a refreshing contrast to note that at least two of the foremost interpreters of Luther are British Methodists. It is more promising still when Professor Outler and Father Florovsky speak in agreement about their common history.

**S**SECOND, another task in the development of the Faith and Order Commission is, in the words of its Constitution, "To proclaim the essential oneness of the Church of Christ and to keep prominently before the World Council and the Churches the obligation to manifest that unity and its urgency for evangelism."

We have an obligation to propagate the Gospel of unity in the organized work of the World Council and in the churches which are its members. Clearly we have small resources for mass propaganda, and this is not to be deplored. There is a better means of making it known that practical cooperation alone is not sufficient, and that the preaching of genuine reconciliation by Jesus Christ is sabotaged by the resistance of the denominations and parties to his reconciling work among themselves. We rely upon the experiences of many Christians in ecumenical conferences of all kinds to turn them into veritable "apostles of unity." And we count upon such persons as you who are gathered here at Oberlin to preach the sermons, make the speeches, write the articles and books, plan the agenda, and offer the prayers which will further the movement for unity.

**A**THIRD and often fascinating task we have is to trace the astonishing progress in the direction of intercommunion and church union. The plain facts contradict all notions that the urge for unity has spent its force. Are you Lutheran, Anglican, Baptist, Presbyterian-Reformed, Disciple, Methodist, Quaker, Mennonite, Moravian, or already partly united? Are you from Canada, the United States, Mexico, Jamaica, Uruguay or Argentina; from Great Britain, Holland, Germany, Poland, Italy or Spain; from Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Northern Rhodesia, South Africa, or Madagascar; from Pakistan, India, Ceylon, Indonesia, Japan, Australia or New Zealand? Then you may know that in at least one of these countries there are churches of your own confessional family which are now engaged in serious official negotiations which lead toward a relationship of intercommunion or even organic merger. Church history provides no record of times even comparable to this one.

We of the Faith and Order Commission, without violating our necessary neutrality toward particular schemes of union, do three things. We publish surveys and information and make the hard-to-find documents available. We hold periodic consultations on church union, as at Yale Divinity School this summer, to enable participants in negotiations to share their problems and insights. And we study the schemes and plans themselves, to see how the issues involved in particular ones are of general importance for all the churches. We should not forget, therefore, that this conference on

motive

"The Nature of the Unity We Seek," while it is not a conference on church union, is yet taking place in the context and time of an unprecedented proliferation of union movements throughout the world.

**F**INALLY, this conference in North America should be seen as one among several efforts to bring the discussion of Christian unity down from the awesome level of world-wide representation to regional, national and local soil. It has not yet been determined when or whether there will be held a Fourth World Conference on Faith and Order, in succession to Lund. Meanwhile we are asking the

churches to wrestle with these problems in their own back yards. In 1955 an exceedingly fruitful conference was held in New Zealand. In May of this year a smaller, yet important, one in India. Since 1955 studies have been progressing in Europe in anticipation of a major consultation involving only the Lutheran and the Reformed confessions. And plans are now being made for a conference in Australia in 1959. You may all be sure that our brethren in these other lands are watching with keen interest and expectation what we do here at Oberlin. And the fruits of this conference will become a part of the resources of the whole ecumenical movement in the years ahead.

About these and other conferences

some may be tempted to think cynically. They may share the disdain of Martin Luther, who, when invited to the colloquy at Regensburg, muttered "that a man would lose time, waste money, and miss everything at home" by attending. Nevertheless, in our time we have learned the value, indeed the necessity, of drawing the separate churches and their leaders out of physical, intellectual and spiritual isolation into encounter and communion with their brethren in Christ. This is the work of the ecumenical movement generally and the Faith and Order Commission in particular. So here we are, gathered to listen to one another, and thus to hear what the one Spirit of God says to the churches.

### Christ and the Church

(Continued from page 9)

The Church that understood its own existence is so richly and freely poetic, profound, and demanding ways naturally sought to acknowledge God's bounty and to reaffirm its faith worthily. The modes of acknowledgment and reaffirmation that developed are too familiar for detailed description. They can be summarized as word, sacrament, and ministry, shaped and implemented by order and discipline. In all these modes of church life, God's active presence and man's responses are everywhere involved.

The word, of preachers, prophets, and at length writers, presumably had two main bases: the living memory of the growing community, focused around the oft-repeated content of the *kerygma*, and the gradually accumulating results of "searching the scriptures" for support and illumination of the new teaching. The *kerygma*, the hard core of the preachers' message concerning the messiah crucified and risen, evidently took a standardized form handed down from the eyewitnesses and honored from a very early date (witness Paul's words) as "tradition," normative for proper reporting of the staggering events in which the Church's "gospel" centered. Like the *kerygma* and the more extensive and individually varied *evangelion* of the early preachers, the searching of the Scriptures—meaning almost always, it would seem, the Septuagint, that combined with the Old Testament an important handful of apocryphal books—kept the figure of Jesus Christ in the foreground.

Its purpose was to seek out passages in the Pentateuch, the prophets, the psalms, the wisdom writings that seemed

to substantiate the Church's teaching that the crucified one was in fact the messiah, whose suffering had been foretold; that in him the very Wisdom of Yahweh, discernible in the reported theophanies of patriarchal times as well as in the explicit accounts in the wisdom literature, and variously called the hand, the arm, the power of Yahweh, was incarnate; that his resurrection as well as his suffering had been prophesied; that the supplanting of the synagogue by the Church could be learned from Isaiah; in a word, that the Old Testament closely studied and rightly understood gave authoritative support not to recalcitrant Judaism but to the new gospel. All these insights came under the guidance of the Holy Spirit—the same who enabled genuine believers to pronounce the earliest credal statement we know: "Jesus is Lord!"

**A**T the same time that "the word" was developing in several directions—oral tradition coming to be paralleled by written tradition within which at length a new canon of scripture came to be recognized, simple preaching and confession evolving into doctrine and creed—the Church in worship offered her thanks and affirmed her oneness and her faith and hope also in sacramental acts, *mysteria*, that served at once to express faith and to sustain it. In baptism each new convert, in Paul's understanding, could experience through the action of the Holy Spirit a sacramental participation in the Lord's death and resurrection: the ending of an old life and the beginning of a new one. In the eucharist, an act of shared thanksgiving, believers at once commemorated the Lord's self-sacrifice for them, pledged anew their devotion to

him and to one another, and reaffirmed their eager hope for the coming end and their reunion with him in heaven, all this again as sacramental participation in a shared life of body and spirit. In each of these sacraments the appropriate words—the traditional formula for baptism in the names of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the remembered words from the Last Supper and suitable eucharistic prayers—were an integral part. And the sacramental acts, in turn, had the force of enacted words. Of the eucharist Paul could say: "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim (*katangellete*) the Lord's death until he come."

The unhappy fact, attested by Paul's letters and the book of Acts, that the oneness of the Church affirmed in both word and sacrament was too often violated in fact, even at the Lord's table, must not obscure the proper meaning and intent of these affirmations. The violations are characteristic evidence of that ambivalence of the life of the Church as historical community to which reference has already been made. They are the more shocking, perhaps, because of a long-standing tendency to idealize the first-century community. Kept in due perspective, they may be salutary reminders that the unity we seek is to be found not by attempting to copy a past segment of history, but by opening the far more complex life of the Church in our day to the primary meanings of word and sacrament and to the onward movement of the Holy Spirit.

Not less basic than word and sacrament in the life of the Church is ministry to the world. Indeed, it would not be difficult to argue that in the recorded injunctions of Jesus to his disciples, min-





### THE CHURCH IS TOGETHERNESS . . . OR IS IT?

istry and mission have the primary place. "For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life." "But I am among you as one who serves." "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. . . . Go your way; behold, I send you out. . . ." Add the words ascribed to the risen Lord: "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations." And in the tremendous vision of the final judgment: ". . . the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.'" Included in these injunctions to ministry and mission, as the early Church came to understand them, are preaching of the word, administration of baptism, and service to those who are in need. Ministry in the broadest sense embraces them all. The Church like the Master must serve, else its witness is empty and its sacraments falsified.

Partly for this reason, order and discipline in the New Testament Church was a factor of growing importance, but now by no means easy to describe or appraise. Obviously the ecstatic freedom of a congregation in which prophesying and speaking with tongues could produce a new Babel, and disorder at the Lord's table a sheer sacrilege, could not go on unchecked, without affront to One who is "not a God of confusion but of peace." Similarly, the moral problems of new converts from paganism, to say nothing of the legalistic scruples of some converts from Judaism, required sober practical wisdom and firm leadership. That such leadership took form initially from a number of existential factors in combination seems likely: carry-over of Jewish tradition and practice in the earliest genera-

tions, prestige of the apostles and men like James the Lord's brother, division of labor to suit the new conditions of life in a mistrusted, occasionally persecuted minority sect, and recognition of diverse individual "gifts." It may be that "bishops" (*episkopoi*, supervisors) and "deacons" (*diakonoi*, assistants) are first to emerge from the informal medley of God's "appointees" (I Cor. 12:28; cf. I Tim. 3:1-31), but "presbyters" (*presbyteroi*, elders) "who rule well" seem to have similarly honorable mention, "especially those who labor in preaching and teaching" (I Tim. 4:17 seq.).

It is well known that the proliferation of irregular versions of Christian preaching, teaching, and living prompted closer control all along the line: adoption of an authoritative canon of New Testament scriptures, formulation and requirement of credal "watchwords" (*symbola*), elaborate catechetical preparation for baptism. In line with these other measures, exaltation of episcopal authority at least in the local congregation, and efforts to work out a practical Christian ethic for the changing life of the Church and its members, were appropriate developments of order and discipline.

#### AS GROWING COMMUNITY IN HISTORY

To speak of such developments, at once adaptive and indigenous to the Church, is to turn attention from its beginnings to its protracted struggle with the world and with itself. In this section it is obvious that not even an outline is feasible, but only some marginal comments.

We may well begin with a familiar evidence of the Church's increasingly reflective, critical self-consciousness and its need for clearer differentiation of itself

not only from "the world" but also from the multitude of *haireseis*—"heretical" sects following arbitrary, erratic versions of the Christian teaching and way of life. By the end of the patristic period, four "notes" or distinguishing characters of the Church had come to be generally affirmed, though the precise meaning ascribed to each would vary with different interpreters. By common consent the true Church was declared to be one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.

Its *unity*, which in the earliest days could be directly and vividly felt, very early had to be spelled out and consciously urged: There is one body and one Spirit . . . one hope . . . one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all." As new congregations were established in many parts of the empire, separated by differences of region, language, and culture, direct awareness of unity became more difficult, at the same time that the challenge of multiplying heresies and schisms made a defensible claim to unity more imperative. The practical solution was to stress tests of unity more objective than immediate intuition: acceptance of the one "rule of faith" or "rule of truth," increasingly represented by formal creeds; acknowledgment of the one authoritative tradition taught since the days of the eyewitnesses, written down in the canonical gospels, epistles, and apocalypse, and guaranteed by the testimony of lay, prophets, and writings of the Old Testament; and maintenance of formal communion with an increasingly hierarchical clergy. This practical working concept of unity was meant not to displace the more immediate experience of oneness "in the Spirit," expressed in unanimity of witness, but to implement and support it. Yet there is little doubt that under the pressure of apologetic and polemical needs, the direction of emphasis was being shifted.

*Holiness* like unity was, as we have seen, a basic character in the New Testament pictures of the Church. But its precise meaning was even less easy to agree upon than the meaning of unity. For one thing, holiness was a term of dual ancestry (though ultimately both strains had a common source, itself ambivalent). On the one hand, holiness meant apartness, sacredness, awesomeness, showing kinship with the powerful charismatic mysteries of *manna* and *tabu*. On the other hand, in prophetic Hebrew religion holiness had come especially to mean transcendent righteousness. When the Church of the first three centuries was

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called holy, both of these strains were included, with varying emphases and with many complications in detail and shifts of direction, as the life of the Church and its forms of order have become more diverse.

The primary distinction springs from the original duality in meaning of the term *holy*.<sup>\*</sup> Some have laid chief stress on the ethical sense of the term, and have understood the phrase "holy Church" to mean primarily a Church somehow distinguished by moral worthiness. To such a Church the powerful presence and the gifts of the Holy Spirit are granted. Others have put first the sacramental or charismatic sense of the term. For them the Church is holy primarily as recipient and custodian on earth of "the means of grace": the word and especially the sacraments. They hold that the sanctifying power therein is God's power, whose acts are not conditioned upon the moral rectitude of men, but are truly acts of unmerited grace, that work to overcome evil with good.

Each of these major views has taken diverse special forms. Moral rigorists in the early Church and in various later sects have held that the entire membership of the Christian community must be free from sin, or at least from "mortal sins," and that grave offenders must be expelled. Others have held that at least a faithful nucleus must live as saints: the clergy or at least the higher clergy, monastic followers of a more exacting "way of perfection," an inner circle of "true believers" in distinction from nominal or indolent church members. Still others reject every claim to simple rectitude either for the whole community or for any of its members, and hold that the only righteousness possible for men is the God-given status of forgiven sinners. Common to all these views is the conviction that the existence of the Church cannot be so held apart from the lives of its members that the Church remains essentially unaffected by what they are and do. At the same time, all would agree that man's righteousness comes from God, that the Holy Spirit works freely through means of his own choosing, and that the Church's holiness is God's gift.

It is at this point that the closest approach is made to the second major view: that the holiness of the Church is most fitly understood as primarily sacramental or charismatic, rather than moral. Granted that the Spirit is free to act through many means to save men, it

remains true that the word and the recognized sacraments (two, or seven, or some other number) have been especially appointed as "means of grace." These have been entrusted to the Church, whose holiness consists first of all in this trust and the saving power it embodies. This view, like the former, is held in various ways. Some hold that word and sacraments have been entrusted to the whole congregation of believers, who compose the "holy Church."

Others hold that not in practical expediency alone, but in reality, the means of grace are given into the keeping of priests and bishops, or of ministers, "rightly ordained" who administer word and sacraments not as representatives of the congregation but as consecrated appointees of the Lord. To them especially and essentially the sacramental power and holiness of the Church pertains. Still others affirm that the holy Church is a real being distinct from its members, both clergy and laity, and that its holiness is the true perfection of a living body that is even now "without spot or wrinkle . . . holy and without blemish."

Next among the "notes of the Church" is *catholicity*, another term of varied meaning. The primary and most obvious sense, of course, is wholeness and universality, whether in geographic extent, inclusiveness of membership, or freedom from provincialism in temper and interest. When Ignatius of Antioch first used the phrase *ekklesia katholike*, it seems to have been in this first sense, or in an even simpler sense: "The Church as a whole, in contrast to the Church in Antioch, in Smyrna, in Rome. But before the second century ended, the term was used at least as often to mean the orthodox Church as against the sectarian heresies. Enthusiasts like Tertullian and the Montanists used it scornfully to label the majority Church as dull spirited and unheroic, and the Donatists later did the same. Against these would-be followers of Cyprian, Augustine proposed a modified combination of the first two meanings. For him the catholic Church is both orthodox and inclusive, though not all-embracing, having members in every nation and in every social class and walk of life. Finally, with the quick succession of changes and divisions in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the term has been claimed especially by conservative defenders of ancient tradition, liturgy, and order, and of the primacy of the sacraments in the life of the Church; and, somewhat ironically, the same term (with a small c) is claimed by some ultra-

liberals who are uneasy at being called Protestants. In short, this word that seems to promise room for all Christians has been made an instrument of partisanship.

The fourth "note" is *apostolicity*. Here the initial meaning was simple and clear: the Church *sent* by divine appointment, as apostles are sent, on mission to the world. But other meanings quickly overlaid this one. Apostolic churches in the first two centuries were congregations in particular cities that were known or believed to have been founded by apostles or their close companions. Again the polemic against heresies brought complication. For against the novelty and variety of heretical teachings, the Church's appeal was to the antiquity and unity of the apostolic tradition; and Irenaeus argued strongly that the simplest way for the Church to establish its title to the authentic teaching of the apostles was to show an unbroken line of known witnesses in churches of apostolic foundation.

Here the primary stress was on the traditional teaching, and the line of successive bishops in an apostolic foundation was to guarantee that the teaching was truly that received from the eyewitnesses. But with the rivalries among the great sees for preferment, claims were pressed on the ground of apostolic inheritance not only to authentic teaching but jurisdictional authority for successors to the apostles. Most of all at Rome, and perhaps most forcefully in patristic times by Leo I., this claim was carried a final step further. As Peter had been given jurisdiction even over his fellow apostles, so his successors in Rome (called in due course "the Apostolic See") had rightful jurisdiction over all other Christians, including their fellow bishops and patriarchs. Happily we have no such claim to adjudicate among us here. But we do have as an inherited problem to discover in what sense for us all the Church is apostolic.

In face of these accumulated complications, is it possible so to characterize the Church in history that the cherishable values signalized by the traditional "notes" may be conserved? I suggest two sorts of characterization.

The first was proposed years ago by an Anglican friend who asked whether the current existence of the Church might be described as "sacramental existence": the phenomena of the Church's life on its human side being the outward visible sign of an inward spiritual grace. This seems to me right. It takes seriously both clauses in the creed: "the communion of

<sup>\*</sup> The pattern of these paragraphs results from a suggestion of Professor E. R. Hardy.

saints, the forgiveness of sins" (*communio sanctorum, remissionem peccatorum*), and treats them as not separable. It views the Church as living community at once of grace and of faith.

**T**HE Church thus is seen as genuinely historical reality, having its true being not simply within any moment or segment of time, yet not apart from time, since the grace of God, the decisive redemption in Jesus Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit work within time and space and history, yet from beyond all these. The historical variations and deviations of the Church are then to be viewed as truly ingredients in its historical existence: not as irrelevancies or unrealities, but as real and visible signs of struggle, of gain and loss, to be transcended but not to be minimized.

A second characterization comes from the New Testament age, when indeed it was sometimes all too prominent, and disavows the habit many centuries old of treating the Church almost as a secular *fait accompli*. It affirms again that the Church is an eschatologically oriented community. Just as in the preceding view its source of life works from before and beyond, but not apart from the events of its earthly history, so in this view its goal and fulfillment are beyond the boundary toward which its history moves, yet already accessible to faith and hope, and inseparable from the Church's present existence. Inseparable, but not simply continuation of it; for in this perspective fulfillment involves transformation so drastic that death and resurrection provide the terms in which we try to think of it.

In these two perspectives, the traditional "notes" can have vital meaning. Our unity is real now primarily in God and his gracious action in our history, not primarily in what we do. It is real in Jesus Christ as our head and quickener of our faith, and in the Holy Spirit tirelessly giving us life. But by participation it is real also in us, when we cease to claim it and instead open ourselves to it in penitence and common prayer. By insisting on making unity in our own image, we accentuate our differences. In seeking to see more clearly and steadily the springing of our many streams from one fountain, we find ourselves startled again and again by the realization that "the river of truth is one." Our unity is real also in the end toward which we all move. And again by participation that unity is effective and imperative in our

existence now.

To speak thus is to speak the language of faith, concerning the life of faith as continuing gift of God. We cannot point to any moment or form or order of the Church's earthly life and say, "Here unity is perfectly achieved." We can trust God's purpose and power to maintain and to enhance living unity among us and within us. We can look in faith to Jesus Christ as Lord of the Church and of mankind and see in him—who is one Lord of us all—the power and wisdom of God making us one. We can discern, often in ways unexpected and sometimes disconcerting, the flooding and dissolving of old barriers, and the surging of new life in new interrelations, where the Holy Spirit it at work.

Such God-given unity is wholeness. But wholeness is health and holiness. And wholeness is catholicity. The unity we seek is all these together: God's saving gift evoking our response.

So too holiness belongs to God, not to us. Yet again the Church and we its members are participant in it when "the mind that was in Christ Jesus" works in us as norm and motive. It is not possible to separate the Church from its members, and to ascribe perfect holiness now to the Church though not to its members. But neither is it possible to reduce the Church to a sum of individuals, and its holiness to their virtues. The Church as sacramental corporate community is in distinctive ways the meeting place of God and man; and where God is—in bush or stable or "the place of a skull"—there is holy ground. But not holiness unclouded, even in the Church. And even at the end, we shall not become God and so achieve perfection. Our hope is, rather, that in the Church transformed and purged, we may see and rejoice in God's holiness, and in our ways reflect it and be lighted by it.

The catholicity of the Church, we have said, is wholeness—which is to say inseparable from the unity and holiness of God-given health. Because the Church for faith and hope is one and holy, she is in the most basic sense catholic. At the same time, she must be catholic also in two other historic senses of the word: inclusive and "orthodox," believing rightly.

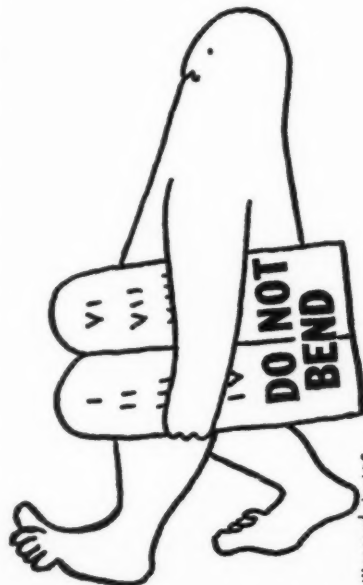
The catholicity of the Church must be at least inclusiveness in intent and effort. As God wills that all men shall be saved, so must the Church will and give herself wholeheartedly to that end. Catholicity cannot mean indifference or unconcern for truth and right. Without

these no one can be saved. But it must mean communion among all Christians and recognition among all Christian communions, with trust that God can deal with our honest differences but cannot be served by a withholding of generous response to any neighbor who needs our understanding and brotherhood.

To see catholicity as inclusiveness in purpose and devotion, is to see it as inseparable from apostolic mission. To see it as orthodoxy is at once to declare its involvement with the apostolic tradition that is our common heritage. The Church that is thus catholic must be apostolic, in outreach and in continuity of message.

**B**UT apostolicity goes much further in its meaning for the Church's life. Unity and holiness are likewise determined by it in essential ways. The unity we seek cannot be self-centered or self-seeking unity. It must be the unity of a devoted embassy from one beloved Sovereign, with one urgent message to a world in need. The holiness given to the Church is not a possession but a trust, for others. Its measure of health is to be found, not in retirement and apartness, but in outgoing service: the life that spends itself and only thus can find its own fulfillment. The one holy catholic Church must be, in this self-giving way, the apostolic Church, sent "not to be served but to serve."

The unity we seek is real now. But it is not our possession. It is our source of life and our goal in the mercy of God.



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## Our Common History as Christians

(Continued from page 11)

history, for it was the means by which the Gospel was mediated to him and to his people.

The tragic fact is, then, that our separate traditions have divided us and keep us still divided in spite of all our longings for unity. Moreover, their separate histories continue to separate Christians who have much else in common—as among the Lutherans despite Augustana; as between the Orthodox and the Romans despite their common dogmas; as between Lutherans and Calvinists despite their common appeal to *sola Scriptura*; as among the motley of the American “free churches,” despite their common ethos. The fact is that there are so many Christian traditions and they are so divisive that the first and obvious conclusion of modern historical inquiry is that Christian history is incurably pluralistic and relativistic. It is no wonder, then, that modern Christians find it difficult to think of historical knowledge as an ecumenical resource or of our common history as Christians.

And yet here, as in many another realm, a little learning is a dangerous thing. We cannot re-enact the past or rewrite the script of history. And if this is what we are after, then historical understanding is useless, at least for the cause of Christian unity. It is even something of a handicap to know too many of the sordid details of our Christian past. *But there is something else that we can do.* We can, in the living present, re-enter the “dead past” and discover what made it alive when it was the living present! We can think and feel our way back into our own traditions and those of other Christians, with an open eye and heart to the presence and power of Jesus Christ in them, as the vital tradition common to them all. We can discover that our common Christian history is not so much a matter of a tradition superior to all the rest as it is the influence of the Christian tradition which has continually informed and measured all the *traditiones ecclesiarum*. This reliving, rethinking, refeeling the past does not change the past so much as it transforms our own situation in the present and the future! The bad essence of *traditionalism*, which some of us fear so much, is simply the power of the past to continue to dominate the oncoming future without its being relived and renewed in the living present. The good essence of historical insight is that it offers us the chance to make a present decision about the past and the future. If we could really renew our sense of history, we could reorient our plural of divisive traditions toward the future in such a way as to enable us to be ready for the changes and challenges it will bring. The unity that we seek is not so much to be recovered from past unity as it is to be grown into, under the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit who is still with us to lead us into the fulness of the truth in Christ Jesus, which shall liberate us from the “dead past.” But no man and no group can grow into this future unless their Christian sense of history is clear and full enough to give them creative freedom toward their past. If we are to grow into the fulness of the unity we have, we must recover

and fill out our Christian memories. For in this Christian past which now divides us, we shall also find a clue to the unity that we have and the unity that we seek.

The creative use of Christian history may be seen when Christians whose histories separate them can recognize in all these several histories the action of the Holy Spirit in *renewing* the Gospel as it was received in them from the preceding generations. The Gospel is transmitted from age to age but it is stultified by simple repetition. It must be renewed every time it is “received” else it is not really received. The original Christian “tradition” (handing over) was God’s gift of Jesus Christ for us men and our salvation—and the essential church tradition is the apostolic witnessing to this deed and its meaning for mankind (deed and witness). When *this* tradition is

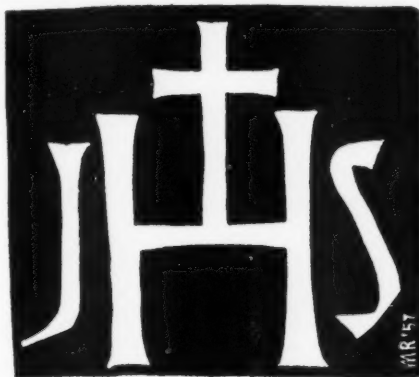
“handed over” to any oncoming generation by the church (by Word and sacraments), it must still be renewed by an *actus tradendi*—an act of traditioning—which changes the recital of the apostolic history into a living encounter with the living Lord. And this *actus tradendi*, as we can plainly see in the New Testament and in the life of the church, is the act and office of the Holy Spirit.

This process of transforming the apostolic history into living faith and fellowship, is what we may recognize as the Christian tradition in all *Christian* history. The process has gone on in many different historical settings

and in many different traditions, but has never fallen prisoner to any one of them. *The* Christian tradition is the living stuff of all church traditions, and their valid measure. When we can recognize the Spirit’s act of traditioning in our own history and in the histories of other Christians, we thereby recognize our common history as Christians. From this recognition comes then an understanding of what is identical and continuous in our plural histories; what it is that makes us able to recognize each other as Christians; what it is that justifies the use of the adjective “Christian” to qualify this church or that.

Our common Christian history is not merely the sum of our separate histories and certainly not their lowest common denominator. Rather, it is the sense which Christians have that God has been at work in our history (and in the histories of others) and that these histories have been the medium appointed—or permitted—through which his revelation has been transmitted through space and time. Such a conception implies that the history which separates us from the Event of Christ (as *traditum*) is also the indispensable nexus which connects us with that event (in *actus tradendi*). The histories which separate us from each other contain the common history which still holds us together.

**C**HRISTIANITY is a historical religion. This means more than that Christianity is a historical phenomenon, that *is* has a history. It means that everything in the Christian message roots in a unique historical event, which gathers up the old history of the people of Israel and creates the new history of the Christian community. The Christian gospel inescapably has to do with events in time, in and through which God has revealed himself—and in such a fashion that the revelation



can never be abstracted from its historical context. We believe that God has chosen to reveal himself in genuinely human events—and to appoint the procession of human events (history) as the bond between the revelatory events and every subsequent event. The Christian community emerged as the effect of such a revelatory event—the event of Jesus



Christ, God's unique act of self-revelation which sums up (and reveals) all his revelations. This community has continued to the present moment by means of the traditional process of receiving, renewing and transmitting the essential witness of that first community and the encounter with Christ which this effects. We today, in our separated communions, are dependent upon the infinitely complex process of transmission by which the apostolic witness has reached us—and on the integrity of the process which links us to the originitive Event of Christianity.

Every Christian has a Christian history. It is the sum of all the past events accessible to his memory and will, which have served to represent to him the apostolic witness to Jesus Christ. It is the impact of the Christian past which confronts him—and others—with the claim of Jesus Christ to be the living center of his existence. It was in some sort of Christian communion that each of us heard the Gospel preached—and at a time when we would not judge whether it was preached well or ill. Then, as we discovered the history of our own communion, and the histories of other disparate communions, we began to have some fuller measure of the common meaning of what we have heard and believed and what other Christians have heard and believed. It is in this way that the discovery of our total Christian past can become one of the most effective means of fuller initiation into the whole Christian community.

It is, then, the search for the identity and continuity of the Christian message as a whole—in the historical experience of the Christian community—that is the essential project of the Commission on Tradition and Traditions. It is obviously a formidable and baffling undertaking. We have chosen to approach it under a somewhat strange rubric. Many Protestants, on first hearing the phrase, "Tradition and Traditions," leap to the conclusion that it contains a predetermined thesis which they are disposed to reject at the outset. It smacks of traditionalism—and we tend to forget that traditionalism can, and does, afflict even the least traditional churches. Others fear that we may try to set up tradition as an equal and parallel authority to Holy Scripture (the *partim et partim* of Trent). It is, they suspect, a large and needless concession to the Orthodox doctrine of Holy Tradition—or even the Roman.

Actually, these baleful suspicions are unjust. For traditions are simply the residues or *deposita* of history. They are just that part of history that "sticks" and continues to function in a later age and situation. If we are to study the theological import of history, the most efficient way to do it, we think, is to explore the historical residues (i.e., traditions) that have developed in the Christian community asking if, and wherein, they exhibit anything in common which can honestly be called the unitive or essential continuity of Christian history. We are not trying to decide which of the existing Christian traditions is the Christian tradition—we know where that would end! But we are eager to confirm the hypothesis first proposed by the Lund Report that "we have found a common history which we share as Christians which is longer, richer and more truly catholic than any of the separate histories of our divided churches." And we invite you to join us!

The European section is focusing mainly on the problem of tradition in the New Testament and the early church. They are grappling with such issues as the Canon and the Church, the Holy Spirit and History, Tradition and Dogma. The North American section has chosen, for its part, a more

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synoptic and descriptive program. We hope eventually to provide historical surveys of the conception and function of tradition (in both its unitive and pluralistic senses) in various crucial periods of the experience of the Christian community; the ante-Nicene church; the Ecumenical Councils; the Reformation and the Protestant scholastics; Anglicanism, from the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries; nonconformity in England and Scotland, etc. . . .

In addition, we aim to survey the impact of modern historical knowledge on the concept of tradition and the problem of "the essence of Christianity" in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. We are also in process of formulating a project on the distinctive shifts in the concept of tradition in American Christianity. Working papers have been produced on most of these topics; they have come under vigorous review and criticism. Two of our papers have been published and others will be. I have tried to develop my own understanding of how our theme bears on the whole cause of Christian unity in a little book, *The Christian Tradition and the Unity We Seek*, which Oxford is just now publishing. It is, however, in no sense an official publication of the Commission.

THERE is some evidence that our work is helping to stimulate interest in the reform of church history both as a theological discipline and as an ecumenical resource. The Ecumenical Institute at Bossey has already sponsored one such consultation of historians and is planning another. The American Church History Society is sharing our concern and giving it a place in its programs. And while we have been groping our way into our problem—which still has an unfamiliar "feel" in Protestant hands—our Roman Catholic brethren are also turning out a very impressive amount of work, in review and reappraisal of their now "traditional" (i.e., Tridentine) doctrine of tradition. You may be interested to see Father Tavad's *The Concept of Tradition Before and After Trent* and Professor Geiselmann's (Tubinger) three-volume symposium on tradition.

It is a quite extraordinary privilege to be working with such a group of men and in such an enterprise. We are firmly convinced, after three years of fumbling labor, that we are at grips with a basic, unevadable issue—a real ecumenical problem which though vast, and probably unmanageable, is nonetheless relevant and urgent.

What final form our work will—and should—take is beyond our present knowing. What matters more than that is whether the churches, now divided by their separate histories, will begin to consider and share with us this inquiry into the significance of our Christian past for our Christian hope!

The very power that prompts us now to rejoice in our God-given unity in Christ and to recognize each other as Christians comes, in part, from this historical experience of the Christian community. For this it is that links us through the ages with the apostolic age. This is what has brought to us the tradition to which the apostles are the primary witnesses. This tradition—received from the past and through historical time is being renewed for us in the present by the *actus tradendi* of the Holy Spirit, and may be transmitted to the oncoming future by the Word and the Sacraments in the churches. This is what keeps the church from *having* to be bound to its past (traditionalism). This is what keeps us really open to the future, and to the eschatological consummation of tradition when the Son shall reverse the traditionary

process and hand back the Kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all.

God's Spirit has never left the church which he brought forth and which he has been sustaining through the long drama of its history and which he continues to uphold and guide while time shall last. And all those who acknowledge the Spirit's gifts and fruits in other Christians of other traditions are thus enabled to recognize the common history which they share with them. Within and behind our plural traditions we become aware of a singular and perdurable tradition which is our bond of unity and the vital medium in which we may be led by the Spirit into the unity we seek—which may, of course, be quite different from the unity we now expect. We are not asked to despise—or, alternatively, to absolutize—our own traditions. Rather, we must become really open to the traditions of other Christians. We must be willing to "grow together into a holy temple in the Lord."

I said, in the beginning, that this is not merely an affair for specialists. It is worth repeating now, at the end. For what your Commission is trying to do is also a part of the proper business of *all* of us who have any care for the common life in the Body of Christ. Only in such a *koinonia* (of common faith and common history) can we learn to speak and to do the truth in love. Only so can we grow up into him who is our head, into Christ—who was and is and shall be the Lord of life, of the Scriptures and of his Church!



THE CHURCH IS A THEOLOGICAL ABSTRACTION . . . OR IS IT?



## Unity and Disunity (Continued from page 13)

the rest in their conception of the desirable form of Christian unity.

Now let us turn to a different but nonetheless significant pattern of institutional response in North Carolina. This has to do with the racial and economic stratification of the churches. Here, too, a variety of denominational doctrines and politics were represented in the study. The Durham Study Group says, "What has been striking about our own work on the problems of race and class in the local church . . . is that differences of a denominational sort have been of no significance at all. . . . Differences of the Faith and Order variety are artificial and of negligible moment in comparison to differences created by the cultural environment in which the churches are set." Issues of "race" and "class" turned out to be inseparable issues. The correlation between church stratification based upon income level and the divisions arising from color, were so close and plain that both issues could be treated simultaneously. Whether a church were Episcopal or Baptist or Methodist made no difference whatever.

### MEANING OF INSTITUTION AND INSTITUTIONALISM

One of the issues requiring clarification resides in the very definition of institution and institutionalism. What is the meaning of these terms? The word institution is used both in the social sciences and in theology. The Commission uses the concept as it appears in the social sciences with such further refinement as may be demanded by the data of church life. I shall presently indicate the importance of these data. Definitions of institution range widely from any persistent pattern of activity surrounding a human need, on the one hand, to a precisely defined list of traits or characteristics such as the purpose of a group, the charter of an organization, the personnel the relative stability of a pattern of activity, and norms of social behavior, on the other hand. Furthermore, the sociologist of religion is confronted by theology and its significance for the church. This enters into the self-interpretation of the churches, and thus affects their primary organization and ways of work.

The positive values of organizational and other institutional forms for the life, mission, and unity of the People of God are evident. These forms exist to manifest the being (*esse*) of the church or as instruments to be used in carrying out the essential tasks of the church. When the churches divert their institutions from their true purposes or use them as ends in themselves, they manifest what may be called *institutionalism*. This per-

version of the use of institutions, rather than the institutions themselves, is a major hindrance to the life, mission, and unity of the church.

The Commission has initiated a series of case studies of church schisms, church unions, efforts at union that have failed, and ecumenical institutions. These phenomena will be analyzed in order to shed light on the structures, functions, and dynamics of the behavior of churches and their agencies. Patterns of leadership appear to be of special importance. Studies already submitted to the Commission indicate that certain commonly used ideal-types, such as the contrasting classifications of "church" and "sect," need revision. We need to help the churches understand themselves institutionally in terms of self-analysis involving structure, functions, dynamics, and leadership.

The relationship of institution to institutionalism is best understood through the conception of institutionalization. What is it that institutionalizes? This question may be answered by posing two further questions: what function or role does the institution expect to perform? To what expectations in the environment does it respond? Initiation and response are crucial and closely interrelated. Denominations are institutionalized in terms of their ideas of fellowship, mission, theology, tradition and the like. We may call this process self-institutionalization. Denominations are institutionalized also by their responses to the whole cultural environment or by a portion of it. Churches are not always self-aware of the tension that ought to exist between faithful self-institutionalizing and responses to the environment that mean unfaithfulness to the Gospel. Dependence on the environment is one of the chief sources of institutionalism.

These two general sources of institutionalization affect the structures, functions, dynamics and leadership of the church. We may illustrate from some of the Orientation Papers. The Honolulu Study Group on "Local Church Unity and Its Ecumenical Implications" points out that the unity of a local church is a composite of group dynamics and Christian disciplines. There is, accordingly, an inescapable tension between the growing unity of a local church and the desire for broader unity. The local church (and denomination) is subject to institutional introversion, which grows out of a protectiveness and a *self-perpetuating ethnocentrism* which is of the very nature of group life. Its fellowship exists on a basis of deeply personal and voluntary affiliation; and this quality of group life may work against the wider unity of the mission of the church.

Other forms of self-absorption may be due to *social inertia*, to concentrating on

immediate tasks, and to ecclesiastical pride. In a period of revival interest in religion and of successful expansion of membership there may be an institutionalism which is really a form of ecclesiastical *imperialism* in a denomination. Institutional prosperity is not always an ecumenical blessing.

When we turn from self-institutionalization to responses to the expectations of the environment we may note also a variety of accommodations. Denominations which were established churches in Europe, enjoying an almost monopoly position in the state, may be small voluntary associations in the United States. Conversely major American denominations have practically a sect status when transplanted abroad. In one sense denominational diversity and disunity in the United States is a function of European Christianity operating in a free society. American cultural pluralism is a result of the variety of national and ethnic groups transplanted here; but it is also an environmental pattern which has institutionalizing effects on church life.

The New York Study Group on Authority and Freedom in Church Government has noted the institutionalizing power of the idea of *freedom*. "The American scene," says this report, "has historically emphasized freedom: Here many strong statements concerning religious freedom in its many facets have been framed; here the principle of the separation of church and state has meant that all churches are in some sense 'free churches'; here denominations which have emphasized certain aspects of freedom have mushroomed into giant size. But this very stress on freedom has sometimes been magnified into an end in itself. Thus understood, it has been one of the contributing factors in the too-easy schism of communions and the rapid growth of new denominations along lines strongly sociological, ethnic, or sectional. In becoming an end in itself, it has helped to nourish an atmosphere in which Christians could understand the Gospel too much in the light of their cultural heritage, instead of seeing their cultural heritage in the light of the Gospel."

This emphasis on freedom, since it undermines the idea of authority, has significance for the institutionalism of *power*. All social institutions generate power. "A one-sided stress on freedom tends to minimize the role of power, and thereby permits power to be wielded on congregations and denominations in authoritarian and unchristian ways." The desire for power itself may be an illicit response to the cult of power in great American institutions. Denominational expansion and even patterns of co-operative Christianity may follow *success-patterns* of the organizational revolution in the United States.

There are many other illustrations which could be cited of how the *self-images* of the churches affect their roles with respect to rural or urban constituencies, national language groups, racial minorities, economic class, sectional interests and the like. There are also many other illustrations of the way the social environment shapes the development of polity, worship, ethics and theology. We must turn our attention, however, to three institutional problems of a general character which influence the relations of the churches to each other, namely, the self-fulfilling prophecy, bureaucracy and polity.

I. We begin with the maxim of W. I. Thomas: "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences." Suppose a denomination has a partial, inadequate, or even false definition of another or of the situation regarding co-operation or of the goal of ecumenicity—that definition of the situation evokes the kind of behavior which makes the originally erroneous conception come true. Why is this? *Social beliefs father social realities*. Theological beliefs, creeds, confessions, worship practices are matters of inclusion and exclusion. This in-group defines the out-group and in part determines its reality. To overcome this institutional tendency requires a dynamic self-awareness which refuses to prejudge the nature of the unity we seek and which accelerates the rate of interinstitutional communication.

II. Another group of problems have to do with bureaucracy, or, as some prefer to say, the administrative top. The role of bureaucracy in churches is analogous to that in all institutions. Church bureaucrats dominate ecumenical discussions. Bureaucracy maximizes vocational security and promotes technical efficiency. Tenure, pensions, incremental salaries, regularized procedure for promotion are related to leadership control. Control, continuity, administrative discretion, and rational order make for institutional efficiency. However, bureaucracy tends to separate the average member, the so-called layman, from the expert who holds the position of legitimate administrative authority. This separation which obtains in any complex organization is increased when the ecclesiastical bureaucrat is also an ordained clergyman. Ecumenicity, the bureaucrat may forget, is a function of the whole church—not of its clerical and administrative top alone.

Though bureaucracy makes for rational efficiency and institutional security, it also tends to develop certain dysfunctions, such as: blindness to needed change; trained incapacity to sense new needs; inflexibility in applying skills and resources to changing conditions; occupational psychoses whereby personnel de-

velop special preferences, antipathies, discriminations and emphases not adapted to social reality as a whole; fixation on goals and objectives however obsolescent; excessive conformity to prescribed patterns which have become routine; transference of sentiments and motivations from the aims of the organization to the particular details of behavior required by rules and rubrics, and transforming means into ends so that instrumental values become terminal values. These dysfunctions are no respecters of denominational politics and apply to boards and agencies as well as to fundamental church structure.

The consequence of these dysfunctions is that the discipline once designed to assist efficiency becomes an intrinsic value and loyalty to ultimate ideals on the part of subordinates is measured by obedience to superiors in the hierarchy of the institution. Bureaucracy thus breeds overconformity.

This partial analysis suggests some leading questions which may be addressed to the denominations here represented. (1) To what extent is the behavior of your church characterized by institutional conformity—with formalized procedures and ritualistic regularity—continued at the expense of membership participation? (2) Has such formalism in your church ever encouraged deviant behavior in the form of sectarian protest or creative, but unaccepted, innovation? (3) To what extent does your denomination identify its own institutional practices, forms, conceptual formulations, ritual and sacramental rubrics with ultimate norms? (4) To what extent do the goals and procedures of your local church and denomination encourage its members to seek new ways of achieving Christian values when the traditional ways seem dead or ineffective? (5) Is correct ritualistic performance given a high place in the life of the church? (6) Are the lofty goals of the Christian witness, service, and mission scaled down to the institutional norms of success? (7) Has the Christian way become an institutional rut?

III. These questions have a bearing not only on bureaucracy but on institutional questions of polity. Here we may profitably refer to the work of the Central Study Group of the Massachusetts Council of Churches. Organization and polity, they found, comprise a field in which the life of a denomination meshes most tangibly with the social and cultural realities of its environment. These matters are usually determined more by practical expediency than by religious principle. Some churches say explicitly that organization is not a confessional principle. Even those who affirm an unchangeable order of the church recognize that it can be embodied in a variety of

organizational forms. Some denominations place primary emphasis on the episcopal form of government, others on the presbyterial or congregational. But it is "a characteristic feature of the present situation that many denominations are moving toward a recombination of the values of these three systems." Both Lausanne in 1927 and Edinburgh in 1937 agreed that a reunited church would recognize the appropriate place of the episcopal, presbyterial, and congregational systems of government. It is significant that in practice most denominations operate in structures and procedures that employ all these institutional forms.

#### ORDER AND ORGANIZATION

The Commission on Institutionalism emphasizes the theological as well as the sociological definition of institution. Thus far we have noted primarily some pervasive sociological traits in church life as they bear on unity and disunity. It is important to turn briefly to the relation of theological institution, or order, to organization.

The problem is one of distinguishing a "primary" organization or "Order" and a "secondary" organization, that is "between an ordered structure which at all times and in all places serves as the means by which God constitutes the Church as the Church and an organization which under particular circumstances gives effective expression to some aspect or other of the primary structure" (*Ibid.*, p. 4). This is the problem of looking for "the principles of discrimination between such a primary organization as is essential to the continuous existence and identity of the church as a visible society and the variety of administrative structure through which this 'order' can be made operative." (*Loc. cit.*) What is needed is the criterion for the "essential distinction between constant function and diversified embodiment." If the Commission on Institutionalism is to do its work well, it needs the assistance of a thorough theological discussion of this point. What is that "order" which distinguishes the church from every other "religious society"? One of the projects of the Commission is a number of studies on the church as a spiritual community and an institution. Aspects of this study include institution and institutionalism in the early church as well as statements from theologians in Europe, Asia and North America. The thesis of the Toronto Group that the distinguishing criterion is apostolicity deserves extensive discussion.

#### CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS ON INSTITUTIONALISM

I should like to lift up some significant issues and problems in conclusion.

● Institutionalism must be confronted at

all levels of church life; from the local congregation, to national denominational organization and international patterns; from local and state councils of churches, to national councils and world ecumenical bodies.

● The local church is crucial. The Nashville Study Group says pointedly: "The loyalties that move us most profoundly are associated with concrete particular symbols, including objects and experiences. A building, a group of people among whom one finds acceptance and status, family associations, satisfying educational experiences that stretch our minds, enjoyment of the security of the familiar, music and hymnody . . . these are only a few." But these are found mostly at the local level. If Christians are to be loyal to a universal church, it cannot be an abstract church; it must have concrete symbolization in recurrent experiences. The crucial character of the concrete local community of Christians is apparent also from the Durham report and the one from Honolulu. We cannot escape the question: "Do the sources of unity which are most effective in the life of the local congregation tend to project the local church's life outward toward a growing unity with other churches, or is the tendency in the opposite direction?"

● Something more than the natural tendencies of group life is essential to a growing ecumenicity. To a greater degree than is true of a local church's unity, the unity between churches is dependent upon a conscious outreach, motivated and disciplined by distinctly Christian concerns. Ecumenicity rests on the *renewal* of the Church. "The ecumenical movement," says the Honolulu group, "ultimately rests on a foundation of religious necessity and hope rather than on practical considerations. . . . It is salvation rather than unity which we seek." The Minneapolis Study Group says much the same: "It would appear that the movement toward unity cannot rely heavily on the desire for unity in the contemporary churches. It must rest on an imperative that grows out of the Christian gospel and the very nature of the Christian faith, about which churches must become more aware than seems presently to be the case."

● Widespread doctrinal consensus among denominations may be combined with institutional complacency and accommodation of a most serious kind from the perspective of Christian faith. Since more than doctrine divides the churches, more than theological consensus is required for unity.

● The various denominational polities—no matter how different in history and form—appear to screen power-structures which are strikingly similar in their foci of power and contemporary operation. Diversity, flexibility, and freedom must



be protected in any structural expression of Christian unity. There is a correlation between church polity and the dynamics of concern for church unity (*Ibid.*, p. 8). The drive will tend in the direction consistent with the ecclesiology of a denomination.

● American denominations have developed a widespread pragmatic attitude toward polity. This tendency toward flexibility of institutional expression may be an important contribution to the world Christian community.

● The significant problem of the relation of authority to freedom has been institutionalized in the United States in the direction of ultimate membership control. It is pointed out that "many who oppose organic union do so not on the basis that the proposed union will affect adversely the freedoms enjoyed by the church in its present form, but because they see such a union as furthering the process of centralization which has already materially threatened the freedoms supposedly enjoyed in a church based upon the autonomy of the congregation." The problem in this form becomes not one of union but of *institutional centralization*. Hence the problem of freedom which must be solved is not so much the union of one denomination with another, as the relationship of the local congregation to the whole church. Americans may be tempted to meet this challenge by introducing more political democracy into the churches, but the solution may more adequately be found in the relationship of the Lordship of Christ to the free life of the congregation. Sociological and theological understanding must unite to achieve this result.

● We have noted that one of the motives

which has created Councils of Churches is that disunity should not stand in the way of mission and service. Yet all the denominations have compromised mission by various degrees of conformity to the American social environment. The New York Study Group on Authority and Freedom in Church Government concluded on the basis of American experience "that no single polity, no matter how effectively it may be demonstrated in history or assured by authoritative law, is able to guard the church against a diminishing of its force and a blurring of its vital witness." The implication of this finding is that the ecumenical process may well encourage, on the one hand, "greater freedom and flexibility in the form of polity and more conscious and committed loyalty to the source of all authority for the church."

● As powerful denominations confront each other they are tempted to measure their performance in relation to one another rather than by the Gospel. Two of the sinister forms of institutionalism are denominational imitation and competition. The unity we seek certainly lies beyond the cult of power and imperialism, beyond competition and monolithic control, and must be found in mutual service and responsibility enlivened by the unifying Spirit of God.

● The ecumenical encounter poses special problems for leadership, both for the leaders of small denominational units and for powerful bureaucrats. The leader of small units is often reluctant to contemplate the heightened competition implied in mergers which would inevitably demand superior standards of competence. The bureaucratically powerful person may develop into an ecumenical virtuoso, not realizing how his personality is shaped by the roles he is accustomed to playing. Or again, leaders who have developed personal power and security in the context of a council of churches may resist the uncertainties of a fuller and more fundamental ecumenical unity. Even so, however, the professional leaders usually act in a protective capacity in a council of churches both with respect to local church interests and those of their denominations.

● Far greater tension between the faith of the Gospel and the institutional forms of the local church is required to achieve full ecumenical unity than has been required by the movement for cooperative Christianity.

● Churches that are truly dedicated to full ecumenical unity must be prepared for institutionalization as truly universal fellowships. Such ecumenical institutionalization requires a degree of Christian self-awareness that lies beyond the present insights of any denomination. The Commission on Institutionalism can serve only to aid in that awareness.



## Worship

(Continued from page 17)

tive part of our task. One way is to mobilize all resources for an ever-fresh encounter with the actual content of the Apostolic tradition and judge the public worship in our churches according to their congruity with its announcement, promise, and demand. This does not of course assume that there are in the Apostolic tradition clear and commanding directives concerning the form and content of public worship; it affirms, rather, that ways of worship which ignore or distort the liberating message of God's Christly action must be corrected from that central action.

2. The other way is to examine the phenomena of public worship as carried on by the various churches, peer behind the accents and selections which have actually modified all of them, get beyond the cultural deposits in the form of language, music, gesture, etc., which cling to all of them, and ask if there is a morphology of the response of the people of God.

The hope is that there may emerge among us, as we inquire into these matters, a way of thinking about worship which will serve to liberate us from our placid captivity within our separate traditions. We are asking if there is a unity in the entire worshipping career of the responding faithful people of God, whence this unity comes, and what is its essential content.

The earliest Christian communities to whose life we have literary access apparently believed there was such a unity. This consensus concerning the Apostolic tradition is the more remarkable in view of the broad and detailed New Testament studies which have elaborated the rich and sometimes confusing variety out of which the voice of this consensus speaks. Before the Gospels, in the form we now know them, existed, the church was giving voice to the general shape and content of what it believed God had accomplished in Christ—which action called it into being, sustained and enabled its life, and furnished it with both task and power. God, it was affirmed, had engaged himself in a personal, incarnate action with man's estranged and captive predicament, had recapitulated in Jesus Christ the entire life of Adam (his created but now estranged human family), had involved himself with every tragedy, limitation, desolation, and even the death of man.

This God-initiated, ingressive penetration of human life is the substance of those records which are the four Gospels. Each, to be sure, has its own character, each has sources unknown to or unused by the others, and each is shaped in ac-

cent and use of materials by circumstances known to us to some degree.

But the morphology of the action of God in Christ is alike in all. Its shape is an inverted parabola. The starting point is the appearance of One who asserted that he came to announce and inaugurate the kingly rule of God in such a way as to actualize the hopes of the people of God, make effective the liberating promise and power of God, establish men, by his life and teaching and deeds, in a new relationship to God and to one another. This lived-out action had a shape which was that of a descending curve which went down, into, through, and under every broken God-relationship, was apparently destroyed at the nadir of its career on Good Friday.

The Gospels, however, are resurrection documents. They declare that God, who is alive, is not stopped in his purpose by the assault of death, but rather carried his action through. His word, Jesus Christ, is victorious over death, lives, reigns, is the second Adam, the Head of a new body, the Church. The old creed of the Church follows episodically the precise pattern of this parabola of the grace of God—born, suffered, died, arose, ascended, reigns with the Father.

This declaration is the core of the Apostolic tradition. We confront it repeatedly in the *Acts of the Apostles*, and in that body of correspondence available to us in the letters of Paul. Especially clarifying and impressive is the way Paul, caught in a polemical situation, again and again appeals to this tradition. In such situations the apostle reaches, as it were, back of himself and back of his hearers, gets hold of the given core of what commands him and them—and strides into the point at issue as from a secure beachhead. That these moments occur in the course of the rough and tumble of his pastoral career, and not, as a rule, as calculated links in a chain of argument makes them the more startling. Paul did not, apparently, so schematize his words to the Philippians as to lead up to the great words in Chapter 2, verses 5-11. He is simply appealing to this community—which was in a fix—to be "like-minded" in the "fellowship of the Spirit."

This fellowship involves a "lowliness of mind." And whence is that? Where shall one behold it, whence receive it? Led on, then, by the questions his own counsel has generated the apostle cannot stop short of sinking the present life of the Philippian community in the entire deed of God in Jesus Christ. So almost accidentally does the all-shaping apostolic core reveal its massive shape behind an occasional pastoral message. This passage is not Christology in order to Christology; it is Christology in order to ethics. And the more persuasive for that reason.

In the letter to the Romans Paul is

called upon to confront a flippant and almost blasphemous *non-sequitur*—a situation not unknown to any preacher or teacher today. If grace abounds more abundantly where sin abounds in force, then one is in the amazing situation of eating and having his cake at the same time! Against such total incomprehension of his message Paul wheels up the heavy artillery of the Apostolic tradition.

The shape of the deed of God, he declares, engenders a total human life in organic congruity with itself; and to be a Christian is to have one's life in its shape determined by the shape of what God has done. Therefore, says Paul, what happened to Christ is the God-given, redemptive pattern of our lives. "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

As then, the morphology of grace in the life, death, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus Christ imparts to and creates in the believer its own shape—so worship is the name proper to the celebration of this new being in Christ by his body, the Church. Such a celebration has a scope broad enough to include all the New Testament means by *leiturgia*, *latría*, *diakonia* (the service of God), and has specific concreteness enough to be verbalized in the liturgical life of the church where it is assembled in public worship. Any definition of worship less rich than this comes under the judgment of such an admonition as Paul's in the 12th chapter of Romans. "I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship."

As then we perceive the bare elements of the apostolic message, and observe how this shape, re-enacted within the behavior by the power of the Holy Spirit, constituted Christian life in the fellowship of the community, do we not also, perhaps, find a pattern for Christian worship? Is there not here a given substance and morphology of response which presses upon all of us, calls all of us to attend, acknowledge, and celebrate? If that is so, then we are given a starting place where, from within our various churches, we ask after what is constitutive of and proper to the content of truly catholic worship.

Every tradition in Christian worship acknowledges that it does indeed stand under this given substance of the Gospel. This is overtly so among the churches which cherish liturgical patterns centuries old; it is covertly so among churches whose public worship is improvised, *ad hoc*, and so free as to make the



### THE CHURCH IS AN ELOQUENT PREACHER . . . OR IS IT?

term tradition strange. The directive of the churches represented in Faith and Order that a study of worship be pursued over a number of years indicates a recognition that there is a *givenness* to Christian worship, and that the common degradation of worship into gimmicks for religious mood-engendering is a kind of impoverishment, a failure, a positive disobedience hiding behind the face of individualism, spontaneity, freedom.

Remembering then the Apostolic tradition, and having in mind the huge spectrum of forms of public worship within the churches—from nonliturgical churches on one side to Eastern Orthodoxy on the other—there are none that do not acknowledge in public worship the following five elements: recollection, thanksgiving, participation, proclamation, expectation.

**Recollection.** A congregation of believers assembled for the public worship of God knows that it did not come into existence at that moment, knows that it is not alone, knows that what is happening is happening because something *has* happened from God's side. What is announced is continuous with what has been announced since the Resurrection.

And therefore all sequences of public worship include, whether in formal liturgical or informal ways, powerful elements of recollection. Mighty deeds have been done, a huge liberation has taken place, an Event called Jesus Christ was, is, and is here—and everything that takes place

presupposes that. "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. . . . In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a love. . . . In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. . . ."

Celebration begins with recollection.

Recollection engenders *thanksgiving*. The content of what is recalled in worship is not a cluster of episodes spiritually elevated above, but essentially continuous with, the structures of human history; these remembered deeds of creation, care, deliverance, and renewal are rather the recital of faith in which is perceived within the structure of history, the ultimate redemption of man. Exodus is an occurrence, and a power-bearing symbol; Incarnation is an occurrence, and the radical mercy of God whereby he did and does what needs doing in the sin and death determined house of man's existence. As then ". . . although they know God they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him"—nevertheless, ". . . when the time had fully come God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons."

Therefore, "Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift." "And all the angels stood round the throne, and they fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying, Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God for ever and ever! Amen."

The Church's thankful recollection of God's deed of redemption is at the same time a *participation*. Hearing, repentance, acceptance of mercy, forgiveness of sins—these are all the work of God whereby man receives no less than a "new-being in Christ." Rich and various are the New Testament images in which this new-being is promised and, given in faith, celebrated. Men are *before* Christ, who beholds them, *under* Christ, who judges them, for or against Christ, who addresses them. But the thrust and destiny of this Holy Encounter is that they may be *in* Christ! The language of participation dominates the New Testament speech about the fullness of the Christ-relationship. "I am the vine; you are the branches." "If any man be in Christ he is a new creation, old things have passed away." "I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me . . . the life which I now live I live by this Son of God who loved me. . . ." "For you have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

Christian worship is *proclamation*. The substance of what is proclaimed is the

same as what is recollected, the same as is now acknowledged by the congregation in thanksgiving as God's salvatory and present power, the same as is offered and received in participation of the members in the Head of the Church. Worship not only includes proclamation of the Gospel of Salvation; it *is* proclamation.

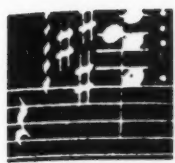
Every service of public worship is a banner of life flying among the banners of mortality. Every assembly of believers in the name of Christ is a proclamation of the *Regnum Dei* by subjects and sons who have been liberated and now live in the *Regnum Christi*. The celebration of the Supper of the Lord is indeed recollection, Eucharist, the seal of forgiveness of sins, and the gift and nurturing of life in the Lord of the feast. But it is something more; something immediate and poignant in the embattled "little flocks" of the first century, known again in our day by millions in shattered and cut-off lives in cells, rubble, behind wire, and behind curtains.

It is the proclamation of engrafted membership in a kingdom not born of history, and therefore, not at the mercy of history's demonic tyrannies. The somber chalice has in our day again become a defiant sign uplifted, the believer's toast of terrible joy. "As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

But all of this, recollection, thanksgiving, participation, and proclamation is the worship, or true service of God, in the body within the theater of this world, a response and a song of praise by the *pilgrim* people of God. And for that reason Christian worship is always *expectation*. This expectation is not an element in a richer context; it is rather the pervading mood of the whole of Christian worship. If I had not been *given* an immeasurable gift I could not expect at all; if this gift were consummated within the conditions of human existence I could not expect, either.

The last word of the New Testament is a dramatic condensation of this "not yet—yet even now." The Apocalypse of St. John concludes "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!" The *Amen* leans backward toward the mighty salvatory deeds of God, affirms that the Church, the Body of Christ is held in God's hand against the powers of hell. The "Come, Lord Jesus" leans forward toward the consummation of "the fullness of him who fills all in all."

The Christian life is a life drawn taut between the *Amen* and the *Come*. This tautness has its suffering, its waiting, and its peculiar service to the world. And inasmuch as Christian worship has been the strange music of these taut and joyous lives in history, a deep study of worship points a steady finger to the nature of the unity we seek.



# MUSIC

Reviewed By L. P. PHERIGO

## THE NEW RECORDS

The long-awaited debut of seventy-nine-year-old Leopold Stokowski on Capitol records has arrived in a superb record called "The Orchestra" (SAL 8385). It is a brilliant demonstration of all the orchestral tone-colors. It consists of eight short selections, illustrating first the separate parts of the orchestra, and then the parts in various combinations. Only one is an arrangement (Ravel's orchestration of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*), and all but one (Barber's *Adagio*) are excerpts from larger works (by Dukas, R. Strauss, Farberman, Vaughan Williams, Perschetti, and Tchaikovsky). It is one of the best demonstration records for real hi-fi equipment, especially since it contains good music under a master conductor. It is expensive (\$6.75) but very top quality.

Another good demonstration record for hi-fi fans is the *Brass and Percussion* album by RCA Victor (LM-2080). It consists of marches by Sousa, Goldman, and Gould, and will therefore appeal more to the less-sophisticated musical palate (and purse; \$3.98). Morton Gould gives these marches a rousing and thoroughly successful performance that will not disappoint anyone.

Nineteen hundred fifty-seven is the centennial year of the birth of Sir Edward Elgar (d. 1934). Many new recordings of his works have been made this year in tribute to him. Outstanding among these are three recordings of his greatest compositions. Sir Adrian Boult and the Philharmonic Promenade Orchestra (of London) contribute two of these, on the Westminster label. *Falstaff—Symphonic Study in C Minor*, Op. 68 (W Lab 7052; \$7.50) and the *Symphony No. 2*, Op. 63 (XWN 17383; \$3.98) vie with each other for top honors among his compositions for orchestra, and these performances are easily the best on the American market. Those who are not enthusiastic about Elgar's music will be more interested in his most popular work (ignoring the first Pomp and Circumstance march), *Enigma Variations*, Op. 36. William Steinberg and the Pittsburgh Orchestra (on Capitol P-8383) play these variations beautifully. The

performance is fully worthy of close comparison with those of Toscanini (on Victor) and Beecham (on Columbia). For me Beecham's still has the edge, but the sound of the new record is much superior. Fans of this music will be interested to know that the composer's performance (recorded the year before he died) is now available on the English market (H.M.V. ALP 1464). I might add that I am still very fond of my old version by Sir Henry Wood, on Decca 78s. On the reverse side, the Steinberg record has a flawless performance of the gentle *Fantasia on a theme by Thomas Tallis*, by Ralph Vaughan-Williams.

Two other modern English works are among the recent releases. William Walton's *Symphony* (1935) gets a high-quality performance by Boult and the Philharmonic Promenade Orchestra (West. XWN 18374). There is no competition, and probably no need for any. Benjamin Britten's *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* has risen to immense popularity since its premier only eleven years ago. It is already well represented in the record catalogs but the new one needn't take a back seat to any. Felix Slatkin and the Concert Arts Orchestra are very effective (Capitol P-8373). Perhaps a choice should rest on whether or not you prefer to have the original spoken explanation along with the music, or the music alone; Slatkin's performance is without the commentary. Of the seven rival versions now current, none are poor, and each one has a different backing; Slatkin's is Dohnanyi's *Variations on a Nursery Theme*, Op. 25, with Victor Aller as the piano soloist. It is superior to the Jacquinet-Fistulari performance, and on a par with the Katchen-Boult version.

Modern symphonic music from Russians is also well represented among the new records. Monteux's performance of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, with the Paris Conservatory Orchestra, is so good I am tempted to use the word "definitive" (RCA Victor LM 2085). It is surely one of the greatest recorded performances of anything. His older one with the Boston Symphony Orchestra was essentially the same interpretation, but this new one sounds so much better that I would recommend replacement. Although the composer's version (on Columbia) is certainly authoritative, Monteux's is my clear preference over all the others.

Two more recent works are harder to assess. Both are played by the Philharmonia Orchestra (of London). The

Shostakovich *Symphony No. 10* (premiered four years ago) as interpreted by Efrem Kurtz (RCA Victor LM-2081; \$3.98) need be compared only with Mitropoulos's version, and Malko's performance of the Prokofiev *Symphony No. 7* (premiered five years ago) is a very vital one (RCA Victor LM-2092), and includes a better version of the *Symphony No. 1* ("Classical") than the Kingsway record that has these same two works on it. The choice between Malko and Ormandy (on Columbia) should probably depend on whether you want, along with the 7th *Symphony*, the *First* (Malko) or the *Lt. Kije Suite* (Ormandy). Both have better versions elsewhere, unfortunately.

Malko and the Philharmonia also offer the Dvorak *Slavonic Dances*, Op. 46 and 72 (RCA Victor LM-2096 and 2107; \$3.98 each). Ten of the *Dances* are on the first record, and the remaining six on the second, along with Grieg's *Lyric Suite*. The Grieg is second best (Van Remoortel's is better) and, in my judgment, no living conductor can match Talich's magical performance of the *Dances* (on Urania).

Igor Markevitch is a young Russian conductor whose considerable reputation in America is based on some very fine European records. His first two American records, however, are disappointing. Best is Beethoven's *Symphony No. 3* (Decca DL 9912), a strong and virile performance, but one that cannot match the Jochum performance which Decca has already issued. Markevitch's other record, Brahms' *Symphony No. 1* (Decca DL 9907), is perhaps too strong, with too much emphasis on the brass and tympani. Here too the best version is Jochum's, but so far it has not been released in this country. Since Decca has issued both versions of the Beethoven "Eroica," perhaps it will yet release the Jochum Brahms *First*, to complete its publication of the four Brahms symphonies by Jochum. Let us hope so, for they are all very fine.

Markevitch tends to play around with the tempo, making ineffective retards and undermining the rhythmic security of the work as a whole. This is especially true in the Brahms symphony. Jochum, on the other hand, is much steadier, and although his tempi are on the slow side, the music never drags, and the over-all effect is very powerful indeed.

Also in the Romantic tradition, a new *Scheherazade* (recorded version number 23 of those now available) goes right



to the top three or four. Fric say and the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra (Decca DL 9909; \$3.98) give an exciting performance, but there are no qualities here to place it ahead of Stokowski's version, or Steinberg's (my personal choice), or perhaps one or two others.

Two Tchaikowsky standards fare well, but not sensationally. The distinguished performance of the *Fifth Symphony* by Rodzinski and the London Philharmonic is now available on one record in Westminster's regular price line (XWN 18355; \$3.98), whereas before it was on three sides in their highest line (\$11.25 per record). The performance, excellent as it is, does not match Mravinsky's on any count. Munch and the Boston Symphony offer the *Serenade for Strings in C* (RCA Victor LM-2105; \$3.98). On comparison with the older Koussevitsky version, I am hesitant to recommend the new one as better. Neither of them is the last word. The new one is a better bargain, however, for it includes also a fine (but perhaps too intense) reading of the Barber *Adagio for Strings* and the best available version of Elgar's *Introduction and Allegro for Strings*, Op. 47.

I cannot recommend two Mozart records very highly. Benny Goodman plays the Mozart Clarinet Concerto (K. 622) very skillfully (RCA Victor LM-2073;

\$3.98), and is well supported by Munch and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, but I am used to the liquid, graceful phrasing of Kell in this music. Goodman faces the same competition in the Quintet (K. 581) on the reverse side, and again, I am not persuaded to lay aside my Kell performance. The other Mozart record has three violin-piano sonatas (K. 301, 304, 380) in a performance which leaves me curiously unsatisfied. Seeman (pf) and Schneiderhan (vln) do everything officially correct, but leave out some indefinable element (Decca DL 9886; \$3.98). In spite of very high recommendations by some critics, I wish to maintain a bit of reserve, without quite being able to explain why.

A marvelous new performance of Gluck's *Orpheus and Eurydice* (Decca DXH-143; \$7.96), featuring Fischer-Dieskau, Maria Stader, and Rita Strech, and led by Fric say, is rivaled only by the Epic set. But why should a *French* work be presented to the *American* public in a *German* translation? The Epic set (in French) will be preferable to most, in spite of some superior solo work in the new one.

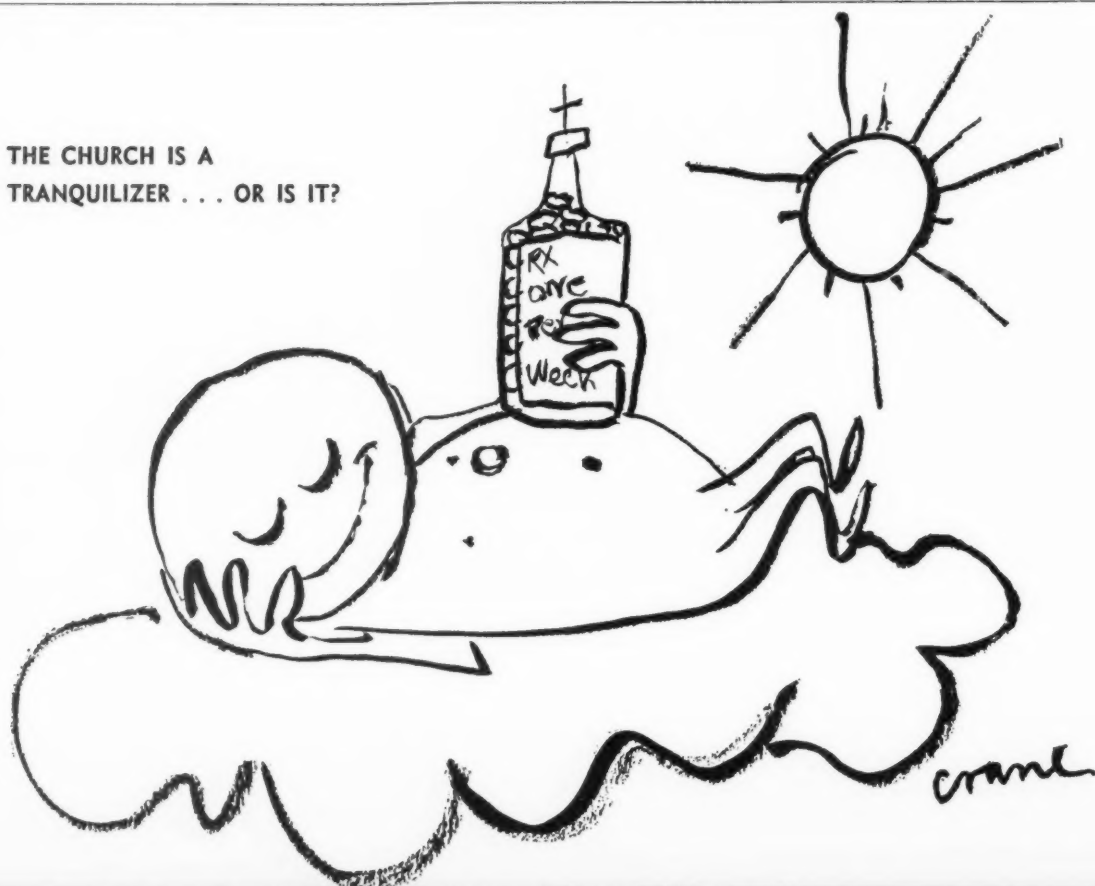
From the baroque period there are two superb records of Byrd's music. The Renaissance singers, under Michael Howard, sing two of his *Masses* (Westminster XWN 18401) and ten of his

*Motets* (XWN 18402; \$3.98 each) in fine style and excellent precision. *Motets* Nos. 4 and 5 are erroneously reversed on the label of my copy.

Ralph Kirkpatrick's performances of the *English Suites* of Bach are now available in the *Archiv* series on Decca (3 records, ARC 3068/69/70; \$5.98 each). These are wonderful harpsichord performances, in the strict, classical tradition that is Kirkpatrick's manner. This music can be made to sound more melodic than it does here, but not more precise. Miss Valenti's rival performances (on Westminster) are more lyrical, less precise, and only about half as expensive. But of the two, Kirkpatrick's is the one to live with.

I'd say much the same about the very fine Milstein performance of all the unaccompanied violin sonatas and partitas (on Capitol PCR-8370; 3 records at \$3.98 each). This is the performance to own, but some day a truly great one will come along. This biggest disadvantage of the Milstein set is that you not only have the wonderful music to live with, but also many audible breathing noises from the performer. This is hi-fidelity with a vengeance! Some of you will probably forgive me for saying I prefer the music alone, but I suspect some others will buy the set just to demonstrate what "true" hi-fi can do.

THE CHURCH IS A  
TRANQUILIZER . . . OR IS IT?



# campus roundup

## THE BIG LANGUAGE RACE

Russian students are learning the English language at rapid-fire speed, says writer Jacob Ornstein in the *New York Times Magazine*, while American students are rather slow on the linguistic uptake.

In Moscow, he says, tots of 6 to 7 in several elementary schools do their recitations in English. On the college level, a survey sponsored by the State Department's External Research Staff has recently revealed that only 165 of America's nearly 1,800 colleges teach Russian to a total of 4,000 students. In Russia, an estimated 10 million Russian students are studying English.

So, in the big language race, Russia is way out front.

Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, in commenting on the situation, says: "The United States today carries new responsibility in many corners of the globe. We are at a serious disadvantage because of the difficulty in finding persons who can deal with the foreign language problem." Thus, language requirements in American schools and colleges are revealing themselves to be inadequate—especially on the foreign service and political fronts where the United States is represented.

In fact, says Ornstein, the Information Agency, faced with the gigantic task of presenting America to the rest of the world and counteracting hostile propaganda, found in a May, 1956, survey that the majority of its 821 overseas officers possessed only limited spoken fluency in any foreign language.

Says Ornstein: "It is becoming increasingly evident that our ignorance of other languages is causing us expense and embarrassment all over the world. The American taxpayer, having picked up the check for foreign aid to the tune of 50 billion dollars, has a right to wonder why American stock is so low in many regions. Without minimizing other reasons, much of this loss

of prestige has resulted from our inability to communicate on a person-to-person basis with foreign peoples. Only about one out of thirty abroad can even carry on a passable conversation in the language of the host country, much less analyze a newspaper editorial indicating which way the political winds may be blowing."

## AND NO COMMERCIALS

At New York University this fall there is a "Sunrise Semester" in "Comparative Literature 10." It's a television course for credit broadcast by WCBS-TV. Said the general manager of the station, Sam Cook Digges: "This seems to have created more reaction than if we had announced we were going to televise live the San Francisco earthquake."

For the most part, everyone is happy at the idea of learning Shakespeare and Milton over morning coffee. But most of the complaints concern the early morning class time. Classes begin at 6:30 A.M.

And there are always the sack hounds.

But, generally, response has been heavy. More than 7,500 prospective students have written to NYU requesting information. It is expected to be, with no trouble at all, the largest class ever conducted in the New York area. Tests and grades and credits will be handled through the mail. From all reports, "Sunrise Semester" seems to be a successful experiment. Station manager Digges expresses hope that "Comparative Literature 10" won't be the last course televised to the eager New York audience and that his station can be instrumental in pioneering this new field of education.

## ON FOOTBALL

T.S. Eliot: "Football has become so complicated, the student will find it a recreation to go to classes."

Bud Wilkinson: "Enthusiasm is the whole point of college football. That's what it's all about."

Jacques Barzun: "To watch a football game is to be in prolonged neurotic doubt as to what you're seeing. It is more like an emergency hap-

pening at a distance than a game. I don't wonder the spectators like to drink."

Heywood Brown: "God is always on the side which has the better football coach."

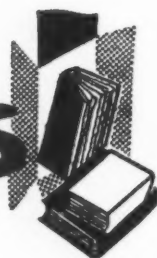
Red Grange: "I've been kicked, pummeled, spat on and cursed at, and generally abused on some of the good days I had running the ball. But somehow all this individualized attention I got from the opposition made me feel kind of proud—proud that they distinguished me as the 'guy to get.'"

Paul Gallico: "It is not an accomplishment in after life to be an ex-football player."



**SPECIAL DELIVERY**

# BOOKS



## TIME, LIFE AND AMERICAN ART

Whatever else is said about the Luce organization, it knows something about printing and distributing the printed word and accompanying illustrations. This accomplished journalistic ability has had a happy courtship with one of Mr. Luce's favorite flirtations, viz., that carried on with the eccentric lady known as Mistress Art.

Unlike many courtships, however, most of us benefit. Two new art publications are the evidence we can show.

In *America's Arts and Skills* by the Editors of *Life* (E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., \$13.95) one of the newest art skills (rapid press color printing) takes on a whole batch of the others from the broadax of the medievalist pioneer down to the purplish blues of an atomic fuel grid.

It is really quite an array. With most of the items any student of American culture is already acquainted, but it is good to have them in such a colorful volume as this. It is the record of an inventive, practical people who have also usually maintained a pretty good sense of taste.

"That is art? —!" is an often phrased expletive when we find a jug passed down from great-grandpa's time, long forgotten in the attic, now adorning an expensive art book. And, of course, it is art, not simply a curio. It has a sense of proportion which is at ease with its task. *America's Arts and Skills* may help many of us to take a second look at a lot of things we have thought beneath our notice or worthy of our contempt. Like the Union Depot here in our city of Nashville. (It is not included in the volume, but it well might have been.) The Union Depot of the N. C. & St. L. (shortly defunct) and the L. & N. is an object of scorn to most of my fellow townsmen and most of our visitors. I find it wonderful—the art of an age not my own. It is a bit vulgar, grimy and tired, but it is also a wonderful piece of art. If *America's Arts and Skills* helps a few of us to realize the treasures we have right at home it will have been worth it. But it is a lot more than that—the record of the nonarty arts—which are true celebrations of the ethos of a people.

*Time, Life's* elder brother, has also got into the act. The magazine's art edi-

tor, Alexander Eliot, has edited an impressive volume, *Three Hundred Years of American Painting* (*Time Incorporated*, \$13.50). Again, it is much what you would expect of a volume with this title. Most of the familiar names and pictures show up: Smibert, Copley, the Peales, Trumbull, Hicks, Whistler, Glackens, Demuth, O'Keeffe, Benton and Pollock. But it is impressive, nevertheless. There is a huge group of reproductions, and for the most part they are carefully engraved and printed.

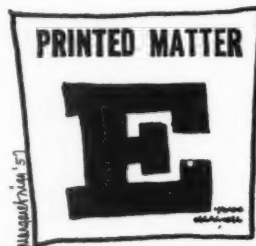
Of course, there is none of the lavish elegance of a short-edition art volume, but there are a lot more reproductions. Nor is there the brilliant tone of a Skira volume with its tipped-in reproductions. There are, however, many things to be said in favor of the approach of this *Time* volume. The reproductions are handled like reproductions. They do not attempt to insinuate that they are anything else but their own pale imitations of the real thing. They are integral to a book which attempts a record of what Americans have done in the medium of paint. All this shows the journalistic good sense of the editors. They have handled the volume, actually, much like an elegant special issue of a magazine. I rather like the approach.

The editors have played pretty fair with our contemporaries: social protest, innocence, despair, disillusionment, shock, and playfulness intermixed. The commentary concerning them is a bit too anecdotal for such brief notice, but even so it is packed with a lot of information and is generally more fair than *Time's* journalistic reputation would lead one to expect were one to speculate concerning what editors might do when freed from the direct shackles of magazine responsibility.

Fact is, I'm delighted with the book. Good for *Time*!

## JAZZ

While we're on the subject of American art, we should not skip the new *A Handbook of Jazz* by Barry Ulanov (*The Viking Press, Inc.*, \$3.50).



Mr. Ulanov is a fellow who knows jazz, having written a lot on the subject. (He also has a Ph.D., which is hardly a recommendation for music criticism, and teaches English at Barnard, which might be—a recommendation, that is.) He has evaluated the field, and we are the beneficiaries.

This is just what the title indicated, a "handbook." It has a little capsule history of the genre and tells something about the instruments, schools, elements, and morality of jazz. But the real value of the book for most of us is to provide a guide for those of us who are now but wandering in the alleys. The core is a "five-inch shelf of jazz history"—a list of long-playing records that gather together the substance of jazz from then (?) until now. These are the major figures and their finest moments, and they are worth Mr. L. P. Pherigo's paying some attention to in his column in *motive*.

From there Mr. Ulanov goes on to give a "fifteen-inch shelf of jazz history" in which solid critical judgment has been exercised. More than history, solid critical achievement has been the concern.

The "appendix" is also about a third of the volume—with a fine list of the musicians of jazz, telling what they have played, when, where, and with what success.

A recommended volume.

—ROGER ORTMAYER

## OF MATTERS POETIC

There is some feeling, both in the dusty critical corners and in many plush publishing house offices, that poetry may be making a comeback. A good many young poets are showing their wares. Also, there seems to be a slight renewal of interest in poetic drama on the college campuses. And there are other encouragements like the New Direction series as well as many poetry prizes hanging about.

And now and then a major publishing house, like Macmillan, will introduce what it considers a new talent in the poetry world. These are usually very exciting moments—especially to poets (because they are the main ones who read poetry) and the English professors and the young poet who has been fortunate enough to have his thin volume put to press.

But it's somewhat disarming, in this situation, when a volume of poetry like *Daniel Berrigan's Time Without Number* (Macmillan, \$2.75) appears. Here is a volume of evident mediocrity imposed on the growing poetic consciousness.

Father Berrigan is a Roman Catholic priest and his verse, unfortunately, sounds very much like one of his radio sermons over the National Sacred Heart Program. He speaks of theology but, alas, in theo-

*motive*



logical terms. And, moreover, he indulges in words like "God" and "Jesus" and "Christ" and "soul" and "heart" so that he faces the almost insurmountable task of avoiding the public stock response to these words. It is this particular fault, I believe, that limits him greatly. He uses stock ecclesiastical symbols and themes in a rather stereotyped way.

This is the trouble with much "religious" writing in our time. Once a writer has chosen the milieu of religion or the jargon of religion, he is immediately faced with the responsibility of putting these things into a highly imaginative and creative style which goes beyond homiletics. He cannot afford, as poet, to say the same things the parsons are saying in the same terms the parsons are saying them.

Father Berrigan would have done better had he sought that certain poetic objectivity which makes the reader explore the deeper meanings and implications for himself. For instance, most of the poems are too heavy. We feel the weight of the world is on Father Berrigan's shoulders, but we never feel any real participation in these torturous poems ourselves. There is no valley among the mountaintops, no light scene or comic relief. All is as solemn as Easter morning in the catacombs. He never steps back to give us the real shock of poetic objectivity. Robert Graves would have made light of the whole subject, no doubt, calling Jesus an extrovert Jew and praising the Roman soldiers for their fine

Golgotha carpentry. He might have made us mad, sad, glad with his cold, poetic finger—but we would have been participating. Father Berrigan just beats his heavy drum a little too hard. Though he has several fine passages, a few fine metaphors and phrases, he never gets much above the devotional level. Poetry cannot afford that.

But the real injustice, I feel, is the neglect of many fine young poets in the publication of this volume. Notwithstanding Marianne Moore's opinion, Father Berrigan will no doubt be just a slight ripple on the poetic waters. Macmillan, and the other major publishers, would do well to have a longer look for a "distinctive voice."

—WILLIAM HARRISON

## LETTERS

*I seldom see an issue of motive but was fortunate enough to find Elwood's discourse on "The Terrible Taste of Protestantism." It was highly refreshing to say the least.*

—Bob Regier  
newton, kansas

*I will be spending my junior year at the University of Edinburgh and want to receive motive regularly. I was introduced to it quite by accident last year and was surprised to find the Methodists publishing such a magazine for college young people . . . I think it an excellent magazine. I enjoy it very much and so do my friends of many faiths whom I have introduced to it. One of them is in Denmark this year on the Scandinavian Seminar and she will soon be writing you for a similar subscription.*

—Judy Lennartson  
edinburgh, scotland

*What's this Elwood Ellwood bit? Don't you know that kind of cynicism went out with old G. B. Shaw? If the taste of Protestantism is so terrible, why don't you form an artistic mystery cult of your own?*

—J. Frank Hogarth  
evanston, ill.

*I think motive is one of the best publications in Christendom, but I think you're aiming a little above the average college student. However, I wouldn't have you change. Last year was terrific. Give us more of the same.*

—Charles F. Hahn  
bertram, texas

*I know your magazine well. I have been getting it for years now. I have drawn inspiration from it again and again. For many years I could have said the same about motive as you now say about kontakt. For instance, I would be very happy to have a man like (cartoonist) Jim Crane working for us!*

—Hans Heinrich Brunner  
editor, kontakt  
zurich, germany

*Until I read some of your letters to the editor in the October issue I did not fully realize that some would criticize your articles and art. You are really living up to the responsibilities of a Christian magazine aimed at the campus mind. Do not lower your standards. We have enough periodicals trying to follow the popular, complacent type of church journalism.*

—Rev. Robert Paul Ward  
marquette, michigan

*I read the article "The Careful Young Men" with a great deal of interest and some very pronounced disagreement. I have literary ideals myself and upon asking several of my acquaintances what they thought of various literary figures,*



[we] came up with the following names as a random sample of idolatry: Hemingway, Huxley, Orwell, Toynbee, Shakespeare, Amy Lowell, William Blake, Sandburg, and others. I was, however, forced to admit that ours is a cautious generation . . .

... Hurrah for whoever does the cartoons for the various articles—they're terrific.

—Miss Pat Collins  
university of southern calif.

*Dear Ellwood: Get yourself TOGETHER, brother, and quit complaining (just quit). The October issue is great.*

—Robert Hamill  
university of wisconsin

*Dear Elwood: Your inaugural was a tasteful one. Congratulations! From the lead I suspected a résumé of Protestantism's abandonment of the working masses to their work. Perhaps in the future we'll get that story. Tranquilly yours—*

—Richard Carpenter  
evanston, ill.



November 1957

# ANNUAL

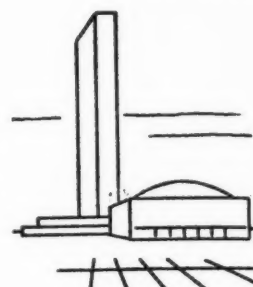
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## *contributors*

**W. A. VISSER 'T HOOFT** is a contribution of the student Christian movements to the ecumenical life of the Church. Formerly general secretary of the World Student Christian Federation, this thoughtful Netherlander is now general secretary of the World Council of Churches.

**J. ROBERT NELSON** is another contribution of the sCm. A graduate of DePauw University, Bob Nelson has been a Wesley Foundation director and study secretary of the United Student Christian Council. The rest of his pedigree is given on p. 5.

**ROBERT L. CALHOUN** has been considered, not just by generations of Yale University divinity students, but by his

peers both in the United States and abroad, as one of the most thoughtful interpreters of a Christian perspective in the cultural involvements of our time.

**ALBERT C. OUTLER**, a professor of theology at Perkins Theological Seminary, Southern Methodist University is thought by some to be unique, i.e., a Methodist who thinks theologically. That is not quite fair to Methodism perhaps, but there is no doubt about the theological competence of Al Outler.

**WALTER G. MUELDER** is the dean of the Divinity School at Boston University. He is a thoughtful observer of the passing scene, but he is also a participant. His sensitive ethical awareness and sense of social responsibility are the more keenly appreciated in a day such as this when we would rather discuss social

ethics than be involved in its commitments.

**JOSEPH SITTLER**, a Lutheran, has recently gone to the faculty of the Federated Theological Schools at the University of Chicago. He is another of the bright young men on the American theological scene who is engaged in breaking down the barriers of theological nonsense and isolation in a way which brings theological perspectives into the center of culture.

**BISHOP JOHANNES LILJE** is one of the Lutheran ecumenical leaders from Europe who has gone through the crucible of an arrogant paganism and the burning hatreds of war to lead in the reconciliation of a divided Church. The Bishop of Hannover, in Germany, he is also president of the Lutheran World Federation.

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# BELLS

*It is well known that bells are ancient in design. They have served to gather people together, to rally them to causes, to get them up and to indicate the time of sleep. They ring for birth, mark the dinner period, and toll for death.*

Once upon a time, to a certain family was given the secret of a novel kind of casting. The bells that the family produced in their little foundry in an isolated part of civilization brought something new into the world.

There was considerable mystery about the Bells (for the name soon got an upper-case initial) made by the family Episcopalis. They had a kind of life that no other bells in existence ever possessed. Their call was different and those who knew their sound came to love them above all else.

The great companies of bellmakers ignored them for a long time, but the Episcopalis Bells started making inroads into their markets. The long established tried derision:

"What queer bells, they don't sound as other bells always have."

They tried boycott:

"The emperor will get you if you listen to Episcopalis Bells!"

They tried false rumor:

"There is black magic in those Bells. They cause mothers to devour their young, and behind closed doors those who are called engage in awful orgies."

They tried savagery, they smashed all the Bells they could find of Episcopalis make; they made living torches out of those who rang them; and caused to be martyred those who responded to their call.

In due time, however, Episcopalis Bells triumphed. Even the emperor gave the ring from his finger to help in making new Bells. It was ordered that none but Episcopalis Bells might be rung, and all others were now derided, boycotted, gossiped about and destroyed.

And the family Episcopalis waxed rich. Some of the members became proud and vain. Others let their Bells become tawdry and tarnished with misuse and disuse. Others were so bedecked that they were hardly recognizable as Bells at all.

One day an apprentice in the all-powerful Episcopalis Bell Co. got so irritated he decided to set up his own foundry. He knew all the secrets of Epis-

copalis, in fact it has never been too clearly established but that he was of the Family itself. Some members of the Episcopalis family (with clear deeds of their succession) agreed with the apprentice, and they supported him in his revolt. So soon new Bells were ringing, and the grace of their communication was felt to be best by many. The new Bells were known by many brand names, some even keeping that of old Episcopalis, to which they had every right, being Episcopalis indeed.

But it was not too long before various of the new Bells began to give off strange tones indeed. Many of them quit being Bells and turned into curfews, making such a screeching disharmony that confusion reigned. And it was most difficult even with Bells to know which were Bells and which were but electronic amplification or some other sectarian trick.

So the Bellmakers decided they must make some order out of their chaotic conditions. They got themselves together and found for the most part they really wanted the same thing, though many now had certain practices they felt to be almost sacred. Only old Episcopalis himself remained aloof from the convention, but it was discerned that he had done a lot of refurbishing of old equipment and put in many of the processes which his rebellious apprentice had instituted.

The new federation of Bellmakers had many points of strain, however. It was generally admitted, although some of the stubborn refused of admittal, that the family Episcopalis (both old and reformed) had something the other bells did not. One of the troubles was that they kept reminding the others of the fact. Another of the irritations was that the others were too stiff-necked to admit the validity of Episcopalis' claim which history supported.

There was much talk about unity in diversity and diversity in unity. In fact, there was so much talk that they forgot about Bellmaking.

And it came to pass that there was a time when the Episcopalisians were with validity claiming the right of succession in Bellmaking, and the apprentice's successors were stubbornly refusing to come back home, and the curfews were still screeching but there was no one left to hear. The people had left for new worlds.

And those that did not hear could not have cared less. They had forgotten there ever had been such a thing as a Bell.

(ORTMAYER)